

Hegel ON RELIGION AND POLITICS

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edited by

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Abbreviations

- AA *Immanuel Kants gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1902–).
- KrV Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. As is customary, references to KrV will be to the page numbers of the A (1781) and B (1787) editions.
- KpV Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788).
- KU Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790).
- GW G.W.F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*. 21 vols. Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. Hegel-Kommission der Rheinisch-Westphälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Hegel-Archiv der Ruhr-Universität Bochum (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968–).
- LPR G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, J. M. Stewart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
- PhG G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1952).
- PhS G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
- TW *Werke in zwanzig Bände*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and H. M. Michel (Frankfurt a.M.: Surhkamp, 1986).

- Rph *Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse: Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821). GW 14 / TW 7. Followed by § number; R for Remark.
- Enc. *Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*. Followed by § number; R for Remark (Anmerkung); A for Addition (Zusatz).

Introduction

Angelica Nuzzo

The connection between religion and politics is a hot and controversial topic in today's political and intellectual discussion as it was in Hegel's time—that is, during the first decades of the nineteenth century and in the first reception of Hegel's philosophy in the second half of that same century. Indeed, issues pertaining to this topic are daily at the center of inflamed policy and political debates in secular states around the world, and shape the life of millions of people in theocratic regimes. Globalization, population mobility, immigrations and diasporas of various kinds, the very nature of our multicultural societies are among the factors that make the intersection of politics and religion a crucial issue of our time. Today questions regarding religious diversity and toleration of diversity, concerning possible limits of acceptability of various religious practices within secular societies, not only pitch the Western democratic world against theocratic regimes but deeply divide the Western world itself.

Philosophically, the problematic constellation covered by this connection addresses additional general issues such as the relation between the church and the state, or alternatively, the sacred and the secular, the theological and the political, and leads to the discussion of the role and limits of religious life within the modern state and in modern politics. For Hegel, it also concerns more specific problems of modernity such as the conception of freedom and the conditions of its subjective as well as objec-

tive realization in the historical world; the autonomous status reclaimed by subjective consciousness and its rights; the limits of values such as toleration; the function of political institutions in fostering, promoting, and regulating those rights and values; and the role that religion, in connection with culture and education, plays in some of the great historical upheavals and transformations of the modern world—from the French Revolution to the industrial revolution and the emergence of capitalism. Finally, the problematic issue of understanding the relationship—historical and political at the same time—between the different world religions becomes a central topic of philosophical consideration. While Hegel here follows in the aftermath of the Enlightenment tradition, this is also an issue with which we are confronted almost daily: how can we judge the different world religions without biases and without superimposing doubtful ideologies and axiologies? Is such judgment possible at all, and can it be separated from a certain, more or less implicit philosophy of history?

Moreover, for its touching on this complex constellation, the connection between religion and politics offers an interesting entry point in the discussion of Hegel's practical philosophy as it exposes some of its most controversial theses allowing one to reassess them in a new light: from the claim that the political state, although separated from the church, is in some sense itself a "consecrated" entity (and that "right" as such is "something sacred"),¹ to the preeminence that Hegel assigns to Christianity (and Protestantism) over all other historical religions, up to the role that such preeminence plays in his alleged teleological view of the historical development (guided, in its latest phase, by the German state). Finally, the focus on the relation between politics and religion sets Hegel's practical philosophy in conversation, on the one hand, with modern thinkers such as John Locke, Edmund Burke, and more generally the thinkers of the Enlightenment, and on the other hand, with successive philosophers such as Ludwig Feuerbach, Max Weber, and John Rawls, thereby leading us to evaluate alternatively the usefulness and the limits of Hegel's theory for the understanding of some enduring questions of our own contemporary world.

While Hegel's social and political philosophy has been one of the most studied parts of his system during the last few decades, and his philosophy of religion, in the aftermath of the recent critical edition of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*,² has also begun to attract the interest of many scholars,³ the more pointed topic of the relation between politics and religion despite its centrality both to Hegel's practical

philosophy and to our contemporary debate still deserves merited attention.⁴ This volume begins to fill this gap. By bringing Hegel's contribution on the topic to bear on some crucial questions of our time, the essays of this volume show, alternatively, the fruitfulness and the limits of the perspectives and ideas he has to offer us.

A first sense of the variety and richness of themes that can be found at the intersection of politics and religion in Hegel's philosophy can be gained by briefly addressing the systematic connection to which these topics belong in the overall development of Hegel's mature thought. To be sure, Hegel's reflection on these issues dates back to his early philosophical works in the Frankfurt and Jena years leading up to the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*. However, it is in the *Encyclopedia* (in its three successive editions of 1817, 1827, and 1830) and in the 1821 *Philosophy of Right* that Hegel reaches his mature systematic organization of the questions pertaining to the connection between politics and religion. And yet, significantly, the systematic structure meant to accommodate these issues is not a rigid one. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*⁵ and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, which gather the material on which he used to regularly lecture from the 1820s up to his death, Hegel often revises and expands on the systematic structure of the *Encyclopedia*, thereby testifying of the liveliness and fluidity of the topic in the ongoing development of his thought.⁶ Religion and its philosophical thematization increasingly intersect with the history of art and philosophy as well as with a broader reflection on culture, social institution, and politics.

The following brief overview of the systematic structure that articulates the issues belonging to the connection between politics and religion in Hegel's mature thought is meant to provide, at the same time, the general framework that unifies the multiplicity of questions and approaches to the topic offered by the ten essays collected in this volume and a perspective from which one may preliminarily evaluate the relevance of the questions at hand.

Within Hegel's system politics belongs, from early on and quite uncontroversially, to the realm of "objective spirit" (*objektiver Geist*), that is, to spirit as it makes itself actual and concrete in the real, objective, and intersubjective world. Herein spirit manifests and brings to realization its freedom in and through the many social and political institutions that constitute the intersubjective, collective reality of *Sittlichkeit* or "ethical life"—the structure of the "family," the sphere of economic

relations, which Hegel calls “civil society,” and the institutions of the modern political “state.” In this process, spirit gains the dimension of its historical existence and freedom becomes a historical reality. Within the structures of *Sittlichkeit*, the state is the sphere in which politics finds its more specific place. The state, however, as the highest form of ethical life is the result of the development of the preceding moments of spirit in its objectivity—“abstract right” and “morality,” which systematically precede “ethical life”—and encompasses them, in dialectical fashion, by reframing them as constitutive moments of the political life. On the other hand, the development of state politics opens up the realm of international relations from which “world history” (*Weltgeschichte*) obtains as the final conclusion of the sphere of objective spirit. Hegel’s modern state is the nation-state that confronts other nation-states on the conflictual scene of world history.

In the overall systematic of Hegel’s philosophy of spirit, objective spirit occupies the middle, mediating position between “subjective” and “absolute” spirit. As everywhere else in Hegel’s philosophy, these systematic distinctions have the dialectical and developmental meaning whereby that which (logically and systematically) follows is the result of what precedes insofar as what precedes is *aufgehoben*—that is, negated but also maintained, transfigured in a new and higher figure—in what follows as it finds in it its truth and adequate existence. In this way, objective spirit, and with it the sphere of politics, must be contextualized both as the result of the overall development of “subjective spirit” and as producing the transition to the forms of “absolute spirit.” Now, the latter is the sphere in which religion finds its peculiar systematic place. In the objective and collective structures of ethical life, subjective spirit, which is both the intelligence of theoretical spirit and the subjective will acting in the world, finds its true freedom and realized existence. The individual in her thinking and acting is here connected to an intersubjective context—to the ethical whole in which she first acquires a higher, more universal meaning for her existence. This development, in turn, yields the higher and indeed truer expression of the absolute and infinite value of subjectivity proper to religion and religious representation. Religion, along with art and philosophy, belongs to the sphere of spirit in its “absoluteness.” This highest level of spirit’s realization is achieved with a “transition” that brings systematically out of world history, raising spirit above the manifold, unresolved conflicts of politics and, more generally, above the finitude of the objective, historical world and allows

consciousness to finally articulate and affirm a content that is truly and concretely universal and absolute. Religion, for Hegel, is concerned both with the representation of the divine or the absolute centered on the interiority of individual, subjective consciousness and with the collective forms of cult and ritual that constitute the life of the church and lend to religion a history and a historical differentiation in the many world religions. The dialectic relationship between the autonomy of the subject and the absolute value of the content offered by the tradition defines the crucial issue confronting religion in the modern world. Moreover, while politics is fundamentally national and hence its universality is always limited, religion even though grounded in the existence of a particular state, aims at a form of universality that is broader and more concrete. This is, in Hegel's view, the meaning of spirit's absoluteness. Religion, however, has itself a history and differentiates itself in the many world religions, which brings to light the inner dialectic of religion itself—of its universal claim and of the universal validity of its different historical forms.

What I just sketched out in a simplified way is the apparently straightforward systematic succession that can be obtained by a quick look at the table of contents of the *Encyclopedia* when the task is to assign to politics and religion their respective places in the system of philosophy. In fact, even on the basis of this presentation alone, it is immediately clear that things are far more complicated than they seem. And in this complication lies the interest, the actuality, and the vitality of our topic, namely, the connection of politics and religion.

The systematic succession that both in the *Encyclopedia* and in the *Philosophy of Right* leads from the extension of politics to the international scene of "world history" up to the new sphere of "absolute spirit"⁷ raises noteworthy systematic difficulties. First and foremost, what is it that makes of religion, along with art and philosophy, a form of "absolute" spirit—an absoluteness that Hegel's systematics suggests should place it above and beyond objective spirit, that is, above and beyond the conflicts of politics and the finitude of world history?⁸ For, evidently, religion is not above and beyond history but deeply rooted in it; religion is not untouched by politics but problematically intertwined with it.⁹ For one thing, religion is itself subject to history and substantially contributes to it; its content is both absolute and historical. This claim, a crucial tenet of the development of the concept of religion in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, seems particularly problematic in the systematics of the *Encyclopedia* where Hegel maintains a strong separation between the

spheres of objective and absolute spirit. Both to the ethical life of the state and to religion belong the two moments of subjective consciousness and collective, institutional objectivity. These two moments are integral to Hegel's conception of freedom. While religion addresses the need of subjective conscience, that is, the infinite value of its interiority and autonomy, it necessarily exists in collective practices and rituals within the reality of the state. Ultimately, it is in force of such objective existence that religious practices and contents have a historical existence and live on in different traditions but may also conflict with (or, alternatively, lend support to) state interests and political demands. But if religion is so inextricably bound to the forms of ethical life (of which politics is the highest one), what is it that constitutes the "absoluteness" of religion, that is, the basis for assigning it to another, higher and successive systematic sphere than the realm of the state, namely, "absolute spirit"?

In the long remark to §270 of the *Philosophy of Right*, in articulating the structures of the state—its universal aim and its relation to the particular interests of the citizens—Hegel famously takes up the crucial issue of "the relation between the state and religion" (but also between "political science" and religion), which had become so prominent in recent times. In opposing the often-proposed claim that religion should be the "basis" or foundation (*Grundlage*) of the state, Hegel recognizes that religion exists within the state fulfilling herein a peculiar ethical function.¹⁰ In other words, religion is not simply concerned with another, transcendent world, is not utterly detached from worldly interests. And yet, the ethical function and existence of religion does not exhaust the actual and substantial reality of religion, which, unlike the reality of the state, can indeed be characterized as "absolute." In other words, its "interest" is not merely a worldly interest.¹¹ One could then suggest that what constitutes the absoluteness of religion beyond or in addition to its ethical function and existence within objective spirit must be properly systematic, that is, must be, as Hegel concedes, a difference in the "principle"¹² to which the activity of religion and the state respectively responds. However, at the end of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel significantly introduces world history together with the forms of absolute spirit—that is, not as successive systematic forms but as forms that simultaneously constitute the reality of the same free "universal spirit."¹³ Herein the difference between art, religion, philosophy on the one hand and world history on the other is not presented as a hierarchical difference in the levels of spirit's development but merely as a difference in the "element of existence" in which

the same “universal spirit” simultaneously displays its forms. Accordingly, in art “the element of existence of the universal spirit is intuition and image, in religion is feeling and representation, and in philosophy is pure, free thinking; in world history is the spiritual actuality in its entire sphere of interiority and exteriority.”¹⁴ In sum, the question remains open: What is it that sets religion apart from the state and confers to it an absolute character even though religion exists within the state and exercises herein a specific ethical function? What is the ethical function of religion and what is its different, absolute value? How does religion relate to the institutions of ethical life—to the individual’s participation in the family, in the economic life of civil society, and in the education of the citizen? And conversely, what is, in Hegel’s view, the state’s and politics’ relationship to religion, to the right that the latter claims with regard to individual subjective consciousness and its autonomy; but also what is politics’ relationship to the collective practices that support and determine religion in its ethical and historical existence?

These questions, which I have heretofore introduced as arising from the very systematics of Hegel’s philosophy of spirit—namely, from Hegel’s presentation of religion as existing within the ethical and historical reality of the state but also, at the same time, as placed above the state and its political and historical conflicts, in the sphere of “absolute” spirit—are extensively developed and debated from different perspectives and pursuing different implications, criticisms, and suggestions in the ten essays selected for this volume. Generally, the essays are presented in an order that allows the reader to become familiar, first, with the more abstract principles of Hegel’s practical philosophy and philosophy of religion, in order to then start thinking of the possible “application” of such principles to some issues crucial both to Hegel’s own contemporary world and to our own time. I shall now turn to a brief overview of each of these contributions.

The volume is opened by two essays—Mark Tunick’s “Hegel and the Consecrated State” and Rachel Bayefsky’s “The State as a ‘Temple of Human Freedom’: Hegel on Religion and Politics”—that directly address the structural, dialectical relation between the state and religion, that is, the way in which the Hegelian state, although informed by religion, remains nonetheless a secular state. At issue is the extent to which the state recognizes religion as its subjective but not objective basis. The two essays ask distinctive questions. Tunick frames his discussion in terms of a confrontation between Hegel and the eighteenth-century conservative

thinker Edmund Burke. Burke's characterization of the political state as "consecrated" or "sacred"—a characterization inspired, to be sure, more by pragmatic than theological motives—makes the starting point. Burke views the state as "divine emanation," while religion secures, for him, the internal stability of the state (against, for example, the upheavals of revolutions such as the French). Tunick suggests that Hegel's state can be considered as "consecrated" as well, although in a different sense than Burke's. More properly, he characterizes Hegel's state as a "secular consecrated state," and sets out to show how this definition is not paradoxical. Religion plays a fundamental function, for Hegel, in the preservation of the ethical ties that keep the state together but does not create a homogeneous community in which everybody follows the same beliefs and religious practices. In addition, religion motivates citizens in the political participation in which their lives find meaning, freedom, and ethical fulfillment, but it also provides the connection to a spiritual totality that transcends individual particularity and its interests. On Tunick's account, religion can be seen as the basis of the Hegelian state insofar as the state is grounded upon the principle of subjectivity that first emerges with Christianity and actualizes freedom whose principle is first embodied in the subjective will. Tunick's aim is to outline the way in which the Hegelian state, in its practical functioning, proves its "consecrated" character, that is, its relation to religion as its basis. In so doing, he addresses issues concerning the role of religion in education, religious toleration, the toleration of atheism. Crucial differences between Burke and Hegel emerge in this connection. While Burke views religion as a stabilizing force within the state, Hegel is aware of the destabilizing risks inherent in the possibility that religion may slip into fanaticism. Burke's consecrated state has no place for atheists, while Hegel allows for atheists to find alternative possible connections with the political whole—religion is not exclusive, philosophy is called in here to counter-balance the influence of religion.

The role that religion plays in Hegel's "rational state" is at the center of Bayefsky's contribution as well. While confirming the general interpretive claim that religion, for Hegel, supports the ethical structures and activities of the Hegelian state, she raises the decisive question concerning the specific kind of religion that Hegel views as indeed capable of fulfilling such a supporting role. The answer is offered by what Hegel calls "true religion," that is, by the inward recognition of subjective freedom based on the reconciliation of the religious conscience with God. Bayefsky's

argument regards the dialectical interaction—or even the reversal of the relation—between the state and religion that allows Hegel to reject the univocal, linear relation of foundation between the two. It is the rational state that helps shape true religion so that religious conscience can recognize the state as a spiritual realm in which human freedom can be actualized. Religion is not simply the foundation of the state, for “true religion” is itself, in turn, a product of the ethical education and formation promoted by the institutions of the state. At stake is a complex dialectical process in which the rational state and true religion reinforce each other. Throughout her essay, Bayefsky challenges clear-cut dichotomies that oppose the secular and the religious state, rationality and faith. While Hegel’s state is “rational” in the sense of not being based on faith or authority, his conception of religion is rational as well to the extent that religion and religiosity are expressed and instantiated in objective institutions that manifest the subject’s freedom; religion, however, being a form of “absolute” spirit cannot be reduced to its function within the state, and is not a mere tool in support of state authority. In this way, Hegel’s *Sittlichkeit* promotes a “reconciliation” of religion and reason. The issue, however, remains—and here Bayefsky’s and Tunick’s questions intersect—regarding the concrete, practical ways in which the Hegelian state carries out such a “reconciliation,” that is, the ways in which the rational state and the church should interact and the extent to which religion in general (and Christian religion in particular) should play a role in informing citizens’ lives without taking precedence over the state’s laws. To be sure, at stake in the reconciliation between the rational state and true religion is the larger problem of modernity, namely, the connection and mediation between the moment of consciousness’s interiority, which should be maintained free of coercion and external intervention and is upheld by religion, and the act of integrating individual consciousness in the collective and objective dimension of realized freedom—the moment guaranteed by the state.

William Maker’s essay, “Religion and the Dialectic of Enlightenment,” contends that Hegel’s critical assessment of modernity, and in particular his opposition to the atomistic individualism of the Enlightenment, which he carries out in the early *Phenomenology of Spirit*, remains the crucial model to understand Hegel’s later insistence on the necessity to restrict the role that religion can be allowed to play in society and politics. More generally, Maker’s claim is that Hegel’s reservations concerning the rationality of religion (i.e., the capacity of religion to really

prove itself “rational”) and the acknowledgment of its destabilizing role in contemporary society all go back to that seminal critique offered in the 1807 work. This is the framework that explains Maker’s use of the expression “dialectic of Enlightenment” in the discussion of the role of religion in the secular world of politics. To be sure, Hegel’s view of Christian religion as a religion of freedom that promotes freedom’s realization in the religious community, grants it an important role in preparing the citizen for secular, properly political freedom. Indeed, when religion and the social-political sphere are rationally constituted, they support and serve one another. Religion channels the rights and needs of subjective conscience within the objective context of ethical life. Thus, insofar as religion cultivates and disposes citizens to participate in the life of the state as the secular instantiation of a divinely ordained freedom, Hegel recognizes its role in forming shared secular and political values even beyond its own sphere, furthering civic unity and mutual understanding. Maker’s crucial (and critical) point, however, is that in order to play this role religion must attain the rational self-understanding found in “consummate,” that is, Christian religion or in religion brought to its final form. In this way, religion in its rationality seems characterized by the need to self-transcendence. Religion leads outside of its own sphere. This is Maker’s take on the problem that emerges from the systematics of Hegel’s philosophy of spirit—the problem I briefly discussed at the outset of this introduction. In other words, religion has a legitimate place in the ethical world if it restricts itself to the claim of individual, subjective consciousness. But this is then also the basis of Hegel’s enduring critique of religion modeled on his critique to the subjectivity and atomism of the Enlightenment.

The fourth chapter, Timothy Brownlee’s “Hegel’s Defense of Toleration,” brings the issue of toleration, which is as crucial to the Enlightenment debate as it is to our current cultural debate, to the center. Brownlee’s central aim is to show that in the long remark to §270 of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel offers a strong defense of the principle of religious toleration, which he sees as the basis of religious pluralism within the state. For Hegel the notion that toleration of religious diversity is required within the state is based on the modern idea of subjective right. Unlike many of the thinkers of the modern liberal tradition, however, Hegel rejects the social contract. Brownlee’s task is to show that Hegel’s grounding of the idea of religious toleration on a different political model than the social contract reinforces instead of weakening the defense of the

value of toleration. To this aim, Brownlee places Hegel's account within the liberal tradition, developing a confrontation between Hegel's position and Locke's and Rawls's views, but also connecting Hegel to recent non-contractarian theories such as Martha Nussbaum's. Locke famously maintains that the demand for toleration complements the individual liberty, established by "civil right," to pursue one's religious and moral interests free of external coercion. In his *Theory of Justice*, on the other hand, Rawls anchors the demand for toleration in the first principle of justice, which guarantees basic individual liberties such as the liberty of conscience. Both Locke and Rawls bring their account of toleration back to individual liberties with which the state cannot interfere. Similarly to Locke and Rawls, Hegel appeals to a set of subjective rights that protect individual conscience. The relation between subjective right and the state, however, is different for Hegel. His defense of toleration is closer to Rawls's than to Locke's, insofar as Hegel believes that toleration is required in many more radical cases in which individuals refuse to recognize direct duties against the state. Brownlee's conclusion is that the overall rejection of the atomistic conception of individuality proper to the social contract tradition, which inspires Hegel's conception of the state, does not entail a repudiation of liberal values such as toleration but is rather the basis of a strong defense of them. The suggestion is that Hegel's non-contractarian social theory, which anchors the idea of political right in the necessity of social and institutional conditions for the realization of freedom, can still provide the platform for a robust account of liberal values such as religious toleration.

The following two contributions—Kevin Thompson's "Hegel, the Political, and the Theological: The Question of Islam" and Will Dudley's "The Active Fanaticism of Political and Religious Life: Hegel on Terror and Islam"—tackle, from different angles, the question of Hegel's relation to Islam. Crucial and controversial issues, many of them close to our own historical actuality, are raised in this connection: from the alleged theological and political opposition, even rivalry, between Christianity and Islam, to the problem of fanaticism and its relation to "terror," to Hegel's sparse reference to Islam and his privileging of Christianity over all other world religions. Thompson's larger question is the relationship between the political and the theological. He addresses this issue asking what are the problems that the emergence of Islam as a "rival" to Christianity poses to Hegel's thought—and asking how should such "rivalry" be construed in the first place. For Hegel, the opposition between Islam and Christianity

is not a purely theological opposition. It is a rivalry that concerns the ultimate foundation of political authority (hence, the ultimate ground of normativity)—it is a theological-political opposition. The focus is on two points: on the one hand, on the general relationship between the state and religion, Christianity (and Protestantism) in particular; on the other, on the specific teleology that frames Hegel's account of the historical development of both religion and right. For, the historical realization of freedom at the level of world history is the terrain on which the opposition between Christianity and Islam manifests itself at the most fundamental level. With regard to the former point, Thompson argues that the connection between the political and the theological remains an unsettled and unresolved issue in Hegel's thought during his late, Berlin years. Ultimately, he suggests that the key to Hegel's view of the relationship between the theological and the political lies in the "political theology" that he reads in the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In connection with the second point, Thompson asks whether the historical teleology within which the two rival religions are inserted is "a pluralist typology" or "a hegemonic narrative of totalization." In this connection, he offers a discussion of what it means, for Hegel, that Christianity is the "consummate religion" (hence, systematically, the highest and unsurpassed form of religiosity). Here he raises the intriguing question of whether there can be, for Hegel, a genuinely new form of religion after Christianity (i.e., after religion has reached its final "consummation"). This, Thompson suggests, is precisely the question that Islam poses as a new form of religion.

Both Thompson and Dudley notice the curious scarcity of explicit references to Islam in Hegel's vast philosophical production, otherwise concerned, in the philosophy of religion, with Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism besides Judaism, Greek and Roman religions, and obviously Christianity. Dudley directly addresses the possible conceptual and systematic reasons for the apparent limited role that Islam seems to play in Hegel's philosophy and in this connection brings into focus Hegel's considered judgment on it. His entry point into the problem are two textual claims: on the one hand, a passage in which Hegel mentions Islam in the course of this treatment of Judaism; on the other hand, the intriguing claim to be found in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, where Hegel establishes an analogy between Islam and the French Revolution on the basis of the abstract formalism, the fanaticism, and the terror characterizing both. "‘Religion and terror’ was the principle [of

Islam], [just] as ‘Liberty and terror’ was [the principle of] Robespierre,”¹⁵ says Hegel. Why does Hegel connect Islam with Judaism and with the French Revolution? With regard to the first general issue of the limited presence of Islam in Hegel’s thought, through an analysis of the concept of religion and its relation to the historically determined world religions, Dudley concludes that Hegel allots to Islam a very limited role in his system because he does not regard it as a conceptually distinctive religious type. Islam is rather considered as a formal variation of Judaism: Islam universalizes the religion of sublimity. Now, Hegel holds that the religion of sublimity, in its universalization is essentially fanatical (and here lies the difference between the limitation of Judaism to the Jewish people and the universalism of Islam). And this leads Dudley to the second point, namely, to the claim that Islam is, specifically, a religion of fanaticism. “Fanaticism,” for Hegel, is the enthusiasm for an abstract thought or position that yields a negative and destructive attitude toward the established social and political order. Fanaticism is the flawed position that takes the negative moment of freedom, that is, the capacity to make abstraction from particularity, for freedom itself. In this way, the type of actualization pursued by fanatic activity—both political and religious—can only be the merely abstract and negative “fury of destruction.”¹⁶ For Hegel, the paradigmatic historical example of such “fury” is the Terror of the French Revolution. Now, Islam is the example of active fanaticism in the realm of religious life. The Islamic believer is entirely submitted to the worship of God but is not, as in Hinduism, simply absorbed into the One. The believer is indeed active in the world but with the negative purpose of destroying all possible conflict with God’s will, of not tolerating any particularity over and above the abstract universality that it embraces. Against fanaticism (both political and religious), Hegel offers his conception of freedom as an objective, historical process of actualization.

The critique of modernity, which Maker addresses with regard to Hegel’s relation to the Enlightenment, is approached by Robert R. Williams in the perspective of Hegel’s view of Christianity. In “The Inseparability of Love and Anguish: Hegel’s Theological Critique of Modernity,” Williams discusses the far-reaching consequences of what he suggests is Hegel’s “tragic” view of Christian theology. Rectifying a misunderstanding often repeated in the literature, and further deepening the work on the notion of “reconciliation,” which interpreters mistakenly restrict to the social context, Williams argues that the idea of “reconciliation” at play in the Christian religion is not that of a harmony free of negativity and

conflict but is rather a fundamentally tragic predicament in which loss and suffering play a pivotal role. On Hegel's account, the Christological theme of the "death of God" implies a critique of divine immutability and impassibility: God is not only related to the world but suffers tragically in that relation. Williams maintains that the union of infinite love poured out in infinite anguish and death constitutes the basic speculative intuition of Hegel's philosophy of religion. While God suffers, He remains God in relation. This is the ontological foundation of divine-human reconciliation. Hegel's idea of reconciliation is permeated by this conception of the suffering God in relation to the human world. In this way, reconciliation is presented as the "inseparability of love and anguish." Now, the claim of such inseparability is not limited to a theological interpretation. It has important political consequences, which emerge in Hegel's critique of modernity. The reconciliation at work in the sphere of objective spirit is fundamentally connected to the reconciliation at work at the level of absolute spirit. The separation of love and anguish, unified in the Christian religion, lead to the abstract and utilitarian philosophy of the Enlightenment in which love is transformed into enjoyment and pleasure, while anguish becomes the fury of nihilism and despair. We have reached, from the perspective of Christian reconciliation, the same Hegelian judgment on the cultural matrix that has lead to the Terror of the French Revolution, which Dudley addresses in relation to Islam. In the sphere of objective spirit, the social and economic effects of the separation of love and anguish emerge in Hegel's diagnosis of some of the crucial, unresolved problems of modern civil society. Williams argues that the separation of love from anguish corresponds, in this sphere, to the attitude of the wealthy who live a life of enjoyment and respond to human misery with moralizing pronouncements that the poor deserve to be poor, while the separation of anguish from love corresponds to the attitude of the poor who are marginalized and left free to fail.

Chapter 8 addresses the problems posed by the differences of nationality and religion within Hegel's conception of the state and the ethical world. In Nicholas Mowad's "The Place of Nationality in Hegel's Philosophy of Politics and Religion," the focus of the discussion is systematically extended as the author tackles the relationship between objective spirit and the Anthropology of subjective spirit in which the idea of nationality finds its first systematic root. In taking his departure from a systematic analysis of Hegel's idea of nationality that spans from "subjective" to "absolute" spirit, Mowad offers a new perspective on the

often-raised objection that considers Hegel's views racist and Eurocentric. Nationality is rooted, for Hegel, in the Anthropology of subjective spirit, where he addresses the condition in which spirit is still immersed in nature, influenced by natural factors such as climate and geography. Now, the geography of a nation's territory reflects on its national religion; while the nation-state is, in turn, a positive expression of this national religion. National characters become dramatically relevant at the level of "world history," in the conclusion of the sphere of objective spirit. Herein, as nation-states display their irreconcilable conflicts and often precipitate in the condition of war, an "absolute" or non-national religion emerges, which is Christianity. Drawing an important distinction between the "nation-state" (which is still affected and shaped by natural differences) and the "state proper" (which has instead processed and overcome such differences), Mowad suggests that the function of the "absolute religion" is to produce the mediation or conciliation among the national agents of world history in the universal dimension of the "state proper." From this interpretation it follows that "Christianity," for Hegel, is not a particular national religion but a religion tied to the universality of the state proper. Hegel, however, famously argues that Christianity historically emerges with the "Germans." Mowad's thought-provoking claim, at this point, is that because of the link that connects the "Germans" to the "absolute religion" and its world-historical function, with this designation Hegel does not indicate a specific nation or race in the traditional sense. The "Germans," in the sense proposed, are beyond race and nationality—they are not the citizens of the German nation-state; they are the carriers of the values of the "state proper." Mowad's conclusion is a rejection of the charge of racism and Eurocentrism. These apply to the limitations of nation-states and their dependence on natural character. The "German" and "Christian" spirit, by contrast, is for Hegel the modern spirit, which is necessarily transracial and transnational.

The two final essays, Todd Gooch's "Philosophy, Religion, and the Politics of *Bildung* in Hegel and Feuerbach" and Andrew Buchwalter's "Religion, Civil Society, and the System of an Ethical World: Hegel on the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," connect Hegel's treatment of the relation between religion and politics to later philosophical developments, namely, Ludwig Feuerbach and Max Weber. Gooch adds an important term to the relation of religion and politics, namely, *Bildung*—that is, broadly, culture and education. His claim is that Feuerbach shares Hegel's idea of the need for a Second Reformation that would extend

into modern political life the spiritual freedom secured by the Protestant movement inaugurated by Luther. Unlike Hegel, however, Feuerbach holds that this Second Reformation would lead to the dissolution of Protestant Christianity in a united Germany organized by a secular, democratic republic. Drawing to the center the issue of the relation between the forms of absolute spirit—religion and philosophy in particular—and the structures of objective spirit that I discussed at the beginning of this introduction, Gooch examines the implications of Hegel's and Feuerbach's respective understandings of the relationship between religion and philosophy for their thinking about politics and *Bildung*. In bringing Feuerbach close to Hegel on these issues, Gooch counters the often repeated claim of Feuerbach's anti-Protestant conception of Christian history (notably, Dickey's interpretation); but he also shows the continuity of the tradition that going from Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller to Hegel constitutes the background of Feuerbach's own concept of *Bildung*.

The idea of Protestantism and its post-Hegelian ramifications occupies the last essay of the volume. The focus of Buchwalter's contribution is Hegel's dialectical conception of the relationship between the church and the state—a relationship that entails, at the same time, the claim of their necessary separation but also a commitment to the interaction and conjunction of religion and politics. In this conjunction, which Hegel associates with the idea of Protestantism, lies his peculiar philosophical view of secular modernity. Hegel claims that the "Protestant principle," rooted in the idea of freedom as self-realization in otherness, must be comprehensively reworked so that it can achieve the "worldly" expression brought to light by the concept of freedom. In particular, Protestantism must take the form of the "system of an ethical world." This is precisely, Buchwalter argues, the program of the 1821 *Philosophy of Right*. Herein Hegel offers the outline of a view of ethical life construed both as the social, economic, and political concretization of Protestant freedom and as a reconstruction or "reformation" of existing social-political conditions. On this basis, Buchwalter proceeds to an analysis of the sphere of "civil society," dwelling in particular on Hegel's account of the "corporation" and on the way in which such account should be brought back to the broader Hegelian view of the principle of Protestantism and the demands of its realization. Buchwalter's claim is both that religion itself requires attention to the conditions for satisfaction that Hegel places in the sphere of civil society and that this sphere, in turn, depends for its very possibility on a religiously conceived conception of ethical life. In other words, we encounter here the same complex dialectical interaction or interdependency

relation that is at the center of Bayefsky's essay and is crucial to the understanding of the relationship between religion and ethical life (and politics) in Hegel's thought. Buchwalter finally discusses the distinctive character of Hegel's position through a comparison with Max Weber's account of the relationship between the "Protestant ethic" and the "spirit of capitalism."

Notes

1. See Rph, §30.
2. Hegel, 1984.
3. See for example Kolb, 1992; Pagano, 1992; Peperzak, 2001; Williams, 2012.
4. See, however, the recent Lewis, 2011.
5. See Jaeschke, 1986, for a general account, and Heede/Ritter, 1973, for the editorial criteria of the publication of these *Lectures*.
6. See Pagano, 1992, 10.
7. See Rph §341 and Enc. §§550–552.
8. See Enc. §552.
9. See Hegel's clear statement in Enc. §549 R at the end: absolute spirit is not "above history (*über der Geschichte*)" (sort of suspended like "above the waters"); spirit lives in history and it alone is "*das Bewegende*"—the moving principle—of history. See Nuzzo, 2012, for this discussion.
10. See Rph §270 R; in the *Encyclopedia*, this discussion is in §552 R, in the conclusion of the moment of "world history."
11. Rph §270 R (TW 7, 415f.).
12. Rph §270 R, fn. (TW 7, 417).
13. Hegel does the same, although less explicitly, in Enc. §549 R and thematically in §552 R.
14. Rph §341.
15. TW 12, 431/358.
16. Rph §5 R. The claim repeats what Hegel already expressed in the *Phenomenology* with regard to the French Revolution.

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Hegel and the Consecrated State

Mark Tunick

1. Introduction

Edmund Burke, the eighteenth-century statesmen and political theorist of conservatism, characterizes the state as “consecrated.”¹ To say the state is sacred, for Burke, is to say it fills an existential need. It provides “hope and sure anchor in all storms” and “an order that keeps things fast in their place.”² Man, who is “by his constitution a religious animal,” is naked without religion, and his mind “will not endure a void.”³ Through the consecrated state, “the poorest man finds his own importance and dignity”⁴; those who administer the government will “have high and worthy notions of their function and destination,” and look not “to the paltry pelf of the moment.”⁵ Without the consecrated state “the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken; no one generation could link with the other; men would become little better than the flies of a summer.”⁶

Burke’s reasons for regarding the state as sacred are more practical than theological.⁷ A state devoid of religion is insecure against the sort of turmoil revolutionary France experienced and that so frightened Burke. By seeing the state as of divine emanation and not the product

of the will of the people, nor of the king, the people are not “suffered to imagine that their will, any more than that of kings, is the standard of right and wrong.”⁸ Burke writes, “[W]e have consecrated the state, that no man should approach to look into its defects or corruptions but with due caution; . . . that he should approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude.” By consecrating the state, “we are taught to look with horror on those children of their country who are prompt rashly to hack that aged parent in pieces and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds and wild incantations they may regenerate the paternal constitution and renovate their father’s life.”⁹

There is a sense in which Hegel, too, consecrates the state. In his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel says religion is a foundation of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*), affording us a consciousness of immutability and of “the highest freedom and satisfaction.” Possessed of religion, members of the state will respect it as the whole of which they are parts.¹⁰ In the *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, Hegel says religion stands “in closest connection with the principle of the State.”¹¹ “In order to preserve the State, religion must be carried into it, in buckets and bushels.”¹² It is folly, he says, “to invent [state] constitutions independently from religion”; if that is tried, the constitution would “lack a real center and remain abstract and indeterminate.”¹³ His point seems not merely to be Rousseau’s pragmatic point that a pious people are more likely to obey the law and carry out their duties.¹⁴ For Hegel, our commitment to the state provides us our greatest fulfillment, satisfaction, and freedom; by being a part of the state our lives have meaning as a part of something that transcends our particular existence.¹⁵ To realize and experience this fulfillment and satisfaction requires a move that religion can facilitate. Hegel says that secular existence concerns itself largely with one’s particular interests and is “relative and unjustified”; “it is justified only insofar as its principle, its universal soul, is justified, which requires consciousness of that existence as determination and existence of the essence of God. For this reason the State is based on religion.”¹⁶

There are profound similarities here in the views of Hegel and Burke. Of course in associating the two theorists we must not discount their important differences. The most important is that Hegel, unlike Burke, is through and through a rationalist.¹⁷ Burke is content accepting “pleasing illusions” that are shielded from the light of reason.¹⁸ Not Hegel,

who seeks philosophically to comprehend the rational form of public laws, morality, and religion.¹⁹ And while Burke rejects the French Revolution entirely, Hegel, while critical of the destructive tendencies of the Revolution, recognizes the positive role it played in establishing rights that are essential to a rational modern state.²⁰ Still, both Hegel and Burke fear the void left by those who unmask and overthrow traditions, and both see religion as an important means of preserving the state.

But what it means for the state to be consecrated, for Hegel, is different than what it means for Burke. For Hegel a consecrated state is not a state that establishes a religion, subsidizes a particular religion, or is intolerant toward atheists, and on each of these points Burke disagrees. It is tempting to characterize the rational modern state Hegel envisions in *Philosophy of Right* as a “secular consecrated state.” But Hegel’s position is not paradoxical. To understand it without confusion, we must recognize that when Hegel says the modern state is founded upon religion, he means that the modern state is founded upon a principle of subjectivity which is an essential feature of a true Christian religiosity. For Hegel freedom can only be made actual in the subjective will.²¹ A will that lacks subjectivity, or the capacity to make an inner, reflective determination about what is right, is like the will of a child or slave, sunk in its content and unfree.²² The modern state is possible only when its members have a subjective will, and we are free under its laws only when we inwardly comprehend their objective rationality. The principle of subjectivity also founds what Hegel refers to as the true religion of Christianity.²³ This true religion is, for Hegel, Christianity in an abstract sense that is disassociated from particular versions of Christianity that rest on views about God’s person, salvation through Christ, or the authority of the Holy Scripture or particular church institutions and practices.²⁴ Hegel demands that religion—not in the special sense just defined of a disassociated true Christianity resting on the principle of subjectivity—must be kept separate from the state, but also that the principle of subjectivity at the heart of the true religion of Christianity is an essential feature of the modern state.

My purpose is to help us better understand Hegel’s views on the role of religion in the state by juxtaposing his views to Burke’s. There are a number of particular issues I shall address, but there is one issue I purposely avoid. Both Burke and Hegel reject the theory of the divine right of kings, according to which God plays a direct role in establishing

and legitimizing political authority (see section 2). But for each theorist there may be an indirect role played by God in establishing political authority. That is an issue I shall not address.

Instead, my focus will be on what Hegel's consecrated state looks like practically. Does the consecrated state establish religion in the state, perhaps by supporting religious education or using taxes to subsidize particular religions? (section 3). Does it tolerate all religions by granting exemptions to those whose exercise of religion conflicts with the law? Does it tolerate atheists? (sections 4 and 5).

In addition, I am concerned with how Hegel, whether like or in contrast to Burke, understands the role or function of religion in the rational modern state. I distinguish two views. One view is that religion provides a tie that binds members of a modern state, creating an ethical community with common beliefs and practices, as exists to an extent in a Jewish or Muslim state. Burke adopts this view, at least with respect to the function of the Anglican Church in England. Hegel does not (section 5). A second view is that religion, as a spiritual form of consciousness, gives to people a sense of their connection to a totality transcending their particular lives. Creating this spiritual connection to the state is an essential role for religion in Hegel's consecrated state, and clearly is for Burke as well. But where Burke thinks that commitment to religion is a stabilizing influence, Hegel worries that reverence toward God, and elevating the universal over the particular, can lead to fanaticism and destroy a state.²⁵ This is one reason Hegel's consecrated state looks so different from Burke's.

2. Rejection of the Theory of Divine Right

Neither Burke's nor Hegel's consecrated state is a state in which the ruler is given authority directly from God. Burke dispenses with that view early in the *Reflections*: only "exploded fanatics of slavery" maintain that "the crown is held by divine, hereditary, and indefeasible right."²⁶ Hegel also dismisses the theory of divine right. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* he rejects the view that laws and the Constitution derive their authority from a divine source, for that view wrongly implies that laws of morality and right are "eternal and unchangeable." While it is correct to say that man obeys God in the act of conforming to the laws

and ruling authority, this view is one-sided, for it implies that men are to obey the laws “whatever they may be,” which subjects people to the arbitrary will of the governing power.²⁷ Hegel is critical of the people of England under the last kings of the House of Stuart for assuming the ruler was responsible for his actions to God only and alone knows what is essential to the state. Hegel’s settled view is that the laws of the state should be regarded as having a divine character, but they must also be rational; and to know what is rational is “the business of philosophy.”²⁸ For Hegel, even if God did set in motion a process resulting in rule by a monarch, what would give that monarch legitimate authority would not be the fact that God invested him with that authority.

3. Establishment of Religion

Whether or not the consecrated state, for Burke and Hegel, is literally created by God, it is a state in which religion plays an important role. To understand that role, I begin by asking whether the two theorists envision an establishment of religion in the state.

A state can be said to establish religion when it favors religion in a certain way. It is sometimes thought to do this by exempting people of a particular religion from legal requirements that create a conflict with their religious beliefs, although such measures may signal only toleration and not an establishment of religion (see section 4). Clearer cases of establishment include granting the church authority to govern, creating a state-sanctioned church, or using state funds to inculcate religious beliefs. In the United States, the First Amendment’s anti-establishment clause prohibits Congress and, by its incorporation into the Fourteenth Amendment, states, from enacting a law “respecting an establishment of religion.” This means government may not endorse religion, though non-state actors remain free to express their religious commitments. That is an important distinction. When football cheerleaders at a public high school in Georgia exhibited giant banners with messages such as “Commit to the Lord,” the district, fearing a First Amendment lawsuit, prohibited the signs. In response, community members began displaying their own religious signs and wearing T-shirts with passages from the Bible, resulting in more displays of religious belief at the games than ever before.²⁹ The First Amendment doesn’t prohibit such expression of religious views by private individuals. The difference when cheerleaders bear the signs

at school events is that they act not as individuals but as representatives of a public school and therefore of the state, sending the message that the state itself is endorsing religion, and that is prohibited by the First Amendment.³⁰

Burke supports the establishment of religion in England. He defended the "Test and Corporation Acts," which limited public offices to those who participated in the Anglican sacrament, even though he did not think much of the requirement and preferred replacing the sacramental test with a promise not to try to subvert the constitution of the Church of England. He felt that as the Church of England was essential to the constitution, giving dissenters access to political power could undermine the constitution.³¹ Burke also supports the use of the government's prestige and resources to promote the Anglican church.³² Hegel understands the importance of keeping the state and religion separate and in this respect his consecrated state differs fundamentally from Burke's.

Hegel says it is wrong for religion to hold the reins of government, as occurs in an ecclesiastical state.³³ He suggests one reason in his early essay, "The Positivity of the Christian Religion."³⁴ There he discusses how the teachings of Jesus became a positive faith of a sect that then gave rise to an external form, the Christian religion, and an ecclesiastical state. Its ordinances and institutions, which "hurt no one's rights while the society was still small, were made political and civil obligations which they could never in fact become."³⁵ Why couldn't the religious teachings adhered to by a sect become the basis for political obligations in a state? We know from his later *Rechtsphilosophie* that for Hegel the authority of a state is not based on an individual's consent to a social contract.³⁶ Nevertheless, if citizens are to be free in the state they must find their subjective satisfaction in the state and come to see its requirements as justified, and in this sense each individual must consent to the state.³⁷ But in the "Positivity" essay, Hegel explains that in an ecclesiastical state, where the church *is* the state, "unanimous acceptance of one faith" is required.³⁸ That requirement is paradoxical: "a contract about faith is inherently impossible" and "null and void," for "a man cannot bind himself, still less his posterity, to will to believe anything"; one has the "right to change one's convictions."³⁹ Churches command unanimous consent of members to their doctrine, and claim a right to exclude dissenters from their fellowship. A modern state incorporates people with particular differences, not all of whom will share faith in the same religion (see section 5). But that is precisely why the state must be granted a higher right than the church's,

to ensure no one is coerced into accepting a religion against their own convictions—something Hegel says the Catholic church has not conceded and the Protestant church only in a limited way and for certain matters only.⁴⁰ Church-based moral systems, which in an ecclesiastical state would be the basis for law and civic duties, involve principles of morality laid down by the church. The church does not leave moral principles open to critical evaluation and revision, and its law is not grounded in freedom or the “autonomy of the will.”⁴¹

A second reason religion cannot hold the reins of government is that religion is a relation to the absolute based merely on feeling and faith; but, Hegel says, a state must be based on knowledge.⁴² A state in which citizen loyalty rests on merely feelings and not reason can be dangerous, made vulnerable to the whims of fanatics.⁴³ Excessive religious zealotry can be expressed through revolutionary actions as well as through persecution. Hegel expresses outrage at the thought of Galileo having to abjure on his knees before his religious persecutors. Science is on the side of the state because both rest on knowledge and not faith.⁴⁴ Hegel concludes that the state, not the authority of the church, decides what counts as objective truth, and that “religion as such should not hold the reins of government.”⁴⁵

Hegel fears that the rules religion prescribes about one’s active life can be destructive of the state by leading not only to persecutions but to passivity and withdrawal from ethical life. A religious ideal that prioritizes the eternal over the temporal, in demanding renunciation of the actual, is opposed to the demands of ethical life. Hegel notes that temporal love, and the temporal need to earn a living, are seen by religion as cares for worldly things that are to be renounced. What is seen from the perspective of ethical life as integrity and honesty is seen by the religious form of consciousness as unholy.⁴⁶ Hegel thinks there can be harmony between the state and the Protestant religion, though, because Protestantism does not regard man as a passive being or insist a man believe what he does not know.⁴⁷

Hegel opposes not only an ecclesiastical modern state but partial establishments, or excessive entanglement of a modern state with religion. In “The German Constitution” he defends the principle of the independence of church and state. He says religion “has completely rent the state asunder” and he is critical in particular of the “*itio in partes*,” or right of religious parties not to submit to a majority vote, for this can block the functioning of the state.⁴⁸ In the “Positivity” essay Hegel is critical

of states in which "baptism is not a purely ecclesiastical act whereby the child enters the church" but is also "a civil act whereby the existence of the child is made known to the state," and the church determines what rights are claimed for the child.⁴⁹ He is also critical of states in which marriage "is valid only if the ceremony is performed by an officer of the prevailing church." Where this occurs, Hegel says, "the civil state has yielded its right and its office to the church."⁵⁰

Hegel thinks it best for the civil authorities to keep matters of faith private so that their religion doesn't get entangled with their public duties. In an ecclesiastical state, the congregation will use its property and resources for buildings, and to pay teachers and other servants, and in a single ecclesiastical state this is not a concern; it becomes one only if there are different churches. In that case, Hegel says, "if the authorities are intelligent, disinterested, and just," the state "would grant to every church according to its needs the means to worship in its own way." But he goes on to say that "a state, *as a civil state*, should have no faith at all, nor should its legislators and rulers, in their capacity as such."⁵¹

Hegel also recognizes reasons why the state should not support religious education that inculcates religious doctrine.⁵² Education is an essential means by which individuals obtain freedom. In the *Rechtsphilosophie* he notes that through education individuals become capable of "being the actuality of the Idea"; they are guided by universal principles to do things as others do them rather than flaunting "their particular characteristics."⁵³ Education is a means of getting individuals to fit into society, not merely with respect to manners, conventions, and social virtues, but also by teaching skills and a trade so that one can participate in civil society by producing and using goods and services.⁵⁴ Of course for Hegel education should also nourish the intellect and enrich our inner life.⁵⁵ Because education is so important in the socialization process, Hegel is critical of pedagogical experiments in isolating young people.⁵⁶ Insofar as education is essential to one's capacity to become a member of society, Hegel explains, civil society has the duty and right to influence the education of children, and can compel parents to send their children to school.⁵⁷

None of what Hegel says about education in the *Rechtsphilosophie* entails that the rational modern state should be barred from including courses in the curriculum that would present religious doctrines to students so long as this does not detract from the education needed to

produce good citizens able to fulfill their temporal duties, and so long as the means of education focuses on critical reasoning and thinking skills.⁵⁸ In the earlier "Positivity" essay, Hegel argues that every man has the right to develop his faculties, which imposes a duty on the state and parents to educate him appropriately. He observes that historically the state has believed the most natural means of fulfilling this duty is by entrusting this responsibility to the church. The result has been that this has jeopardized the young citizen's right to the "free development of his powers" insofar as the church discharges its task in a certain way.⁵⁹ A citizen when reaching maturity is at full liberty in most European states to emigrate, if the laws and institutions of his country don't suit him. This decision can be influenced by habit or fear, but those influences don't annul the possibility of free choice. However, Hegel writes, if the church educates in a way that wholly subdues reason and intellect, filling the person's imagination with terrors that reason and intellect cannot overcome, then the church has entirely taken away the "possibility of a free choice and a decision to belong" to the ecclesiastical state. "It has infringed the child's natural right to the free development of his faculties and brought him up as a slave instead of as a free citizen."⁶⁰ Hegel is critical of the "Confirmation" in Protestant states where the child renews baptismal vows at age fourteen or fifteen. The church has taken care that the child heard nothing save the church's faith, leading his "tender heart"; it declares that the intelligence of a fourteen-year-old is that of an adult, and that "his generally unintelligent repetition of the articles of faith expresses a free choice." The state, in contrast, waits until he is twenty or twenty-one to perform valid civil actions even on matters which are "dung" in comparison to eternal salvation.⁶¹

Hegel recognizes that "in *any* education the child's heart and imagination are affected by the force of early impressions and the power exercised by the example of those persons who are dearest to him and linked with him by elementary natural ties." But "reason is not of necessity fettered by these influences."⁶² The church goes wrong when it inhibits the development of one's reason and intellect and ability to judge by one's own standards. The church, Hegel says, implants ideas and words in the imagination and memory that are so girt with terrors and put in such a "holy, inviolable, and blinding light that either they dumbfound the laws of reason and intellect by their brilliance and prevent their use, or else they prescribe to reason and intellect laws of another kind"; in

either case, “reason and intellect are deprived of freedom.” If the state has sanctioned this education, as it would in the ecclesiastical state Hegel refers to in this passage, then the state “has betrayed the child’s right to a free development of its mental capacities.”⁶³

We must recognize that Hegel is not opposing education in or the exercise of religion.⁶⁴ As rector and professor in a publicly funded Nuremberg Gymnasium, Hegel himself encouraged his pupils to keep the religious festivals of their respective churches.⁶⁵ He also provided some religious and moral instruction, though it is unlikely he inculcated the doctrines of a particular religion.⁶⁶ In his “Positivity” essay he says there are countless difficulties in bringing up children without positive faith, which he does not even discuss because “there are moral reasons why it ought to be renounced.”⁶⁷ But that Hegel believed it proper to instruct students in ideas such as conscience, faith, the meaning of religion, God, and sin, does nothing to diminish Hegel’s concerns about the potential of religious education to subvert the education one needs to become a citizen of a rational modern (as opposed to ecclesiastical) state. Hegel wanted a separation of church and state in the public schools. As rector when Bavaria was implementing widespread public education, Hegel complained when his public school’s facilities were used for religious singing lessons; and he complains to his friend and patron Niethammer about professors having to go to church for religious instruction, reminding Niethammer of his spoken promise two years before to end the “subordination of the teaching profession to the clergy and the clerical estate.”⁶⁸

In §270 of *Philosophy of Right* Hegel does say that “the state fulfills a duty by giving the church community [*Kirchengemeinde*], for its religious goal, every encouragement [*Vorschub*] and protection.”⁶⁹ While this might imply support for state subsidies of religion (especially with Nisbet’s translation of *Vorschub* as “assistance” rather than “encouragement”), in light of everything else Hegel says about the need to separate church and state, I read this passage to mean that the state should tolerate and ensure that everyone has the right to practice their religion.⁷⁰

Hegel does, in a lengthy passage in *Philosophy of Mind* on religion and politics, speak of the view that the state and religion are “separable from one another” as “the monstrous blunder of our times.”⁷¹ I take him to mean not that religion should infiltrate the institutional structure of the state but, rather, that the Protestant Reformation produced a reli-

gious spirituality of the right sort, one that was opposed to the spiritual bondage produced by Catholicism, that historically was essential for the development of a rational modern state in which individuals could be free. Had we left to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, the rational modern state would never have developed.⁷² But while Hegel thinks religion is in this way the foundation of the state, he does not support a state establishment of religion.

4. Toleration

A state might be thought to establish religion when it grants preferential treatment to those practicing a particular religion. But in many cases such special treatment is better regarded as tolerating the free exercise of religion rather than establishing religion. In the United States, courts have granted exemptions from laws or regulations so that one may freely exercise their religion without this being seen as a violation of the First Amendment's antiestablishment clause. One condition for such an exemption is that the exercise of religion must not threaten public safety or impose an undue burden on government.⁷³ Courts in the United States have exempted Athabascans from game laws so they could use moose meat for religious rituals;⁷⁴ Santerians from local ordinances so they could practice animal sacrifice;⁷⁵ and have allowed parents or guardians to direct the upbringing of their children by providing them a religious education at their own expense.⁷⁶ But they have not exempted Native Americans from the required use of Social Security ID cards;⁷⁷ Sikhs from laws prohibiting the carrying of a sword in public;⁷⁸ or Mormons from laws against polygamy.⁷⁹

Burke defended religious toleration, particularly of Catholics in Ireland, who had been denied the vote and excluded from public office, military service, and higher education.⁸⁰ One reason Burke tolerated most religions in addition to that of the Anglican Church was that he thinks they, like Anglicanism, help us avoid the dreadful ethical void he saw in France after the Revolution.⁸¹ Burke defends all religions that are conducive to peace. But he disavows tolerance for atheists. For Burke, atheism fosters anarchy and is the "most horrid and cruel" blow to civil society: "Have as many sorts of religion as you find in your country: there is a reasonable worship in them all. The others, the infidels,

are outlaws of the constitution, not of the country, but of the human race. They are never, never to be supported, never to be tolerated.”⁸² As a Protestant living for a time in Catholic areas of Germany, Hegel was sensitive to claims of religious minorities.⁸³ He, like Burke, defends toleration of religion. In a well-known footnote to *Rph* §270 he argues that a strong state can tolerate even communities who don’t recognize their duties to the state, depending on the numbers concerned. The state may exempt Quakers and Anabaptists from taking oaths and allow them to fulfill the duty to defend the state by substituting another service instead.⁸⁴ But to avoid too close an entanglement, Hegel draws limits to state exemptions for religion. He notes that the church has contrived to exempt their servants and property from the jurisdiction of the state, and sought jurisdiction in matters such as divorce proceedings and oath-taking. But he seems wary of such contrivances, insisting that religious communities are subject to the policing and supervision of the state.⁸⁵ Hegel does add that the state may not interfere with church doctrine.⁸⁶ However, in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, he says that if religion demands that we annul our will, or reject the worldly principle, then government must proceed by force and suppress religion, as France’s did when the Catholic church demanded unconditional submission to it.⁸⁷

Recognizing the important role religion plays in the state, Hegel wants the state to tolerate religion. Does his commitment to toleration extend to atheists? It is sometimes suggested that Hegel tolerates many different religious faiths but disapproves of atheism.⁸⁸ In *Rph* §270 Hegel even says that since religion serves to integrate citizens to the state at the deepest level, “the state ought even to require all its citizens to belong to” a “religious community,” though it can have no say in the content of the religion.⁸⁹ But it is unlikely that Hegel means here that atheists who are deeply integrated into the state “at the deepest level of the disposition [of citizens],” and who do not abjure their duties to the state, must form a church to be free in the state. In the same passage Hegel says that philosophical insight is the best means for integration into the state. As I shall discuss in the next section, for Hegel religion facilitates an individual’s connection to something transcending his particular existence; but if atheists can conceive of such a connection through philosophical insight, they could be at home in Hegel’s rational modern state though they belong to no religious community, though Hegel might think the atheist will be deficient from the perspective of the Absolute. Unlike Burke, Hegel is more fearful of religious fanaticism than of atheists.

5. The Function of Religion in the State

We have seen that for Burke, the consecrated state fills an existential need, giving its members a purpose as part of a “whole chain.”⁹⁰ But this is particularly so for England, given its singular religious tradition, and its peoples’ opinions, prejudices, and habits. On Burke’s view, a consecrated state might not work in another society, such as the United States, with a tradition of religious diversity.⁹¹ The traditions in England, shaped by its history as a consecrated state, create a tie that binds people, linking them to each other, their forefathers, and descendants.

Hegel recognizes the role religion historically played in the development of nations. He speaks of the substantial foundation of a nation as the “absolute ground of faith.” “All individuals are [b]orn into the faith of their forefathers” which is something holy for them, and is their authority; “This constitutes the ground of faith that is given by historical development.”⁹² Here Hegel has in mind how Homer and Hesiod depicted the Greek gods in conformity with the Greek spirit, and Greek religion became part of the *Bildung* shaping Greek ethical life.⁹³

But though religion may be a tie that binds members of a nation, for Hegel it is not a tie that binds members of a rational modern state. Hegel distinguishes states from nations.⁹⁴ There are stateless nations;⁹⁵ and a nation may consist of several states.⁹⁶ People of different nations, and of different religions, can be members of one state.⁹⁷ Citizens need not all practice the same religion, as Hegel makes clear in saying that the state can tolerate different religions.

Religion’s function in a modern state is not to forge a particular political identity based on blood or ethnicity; it has a more universal role in addressing an existential need all citizens face. Christianity arose on the fertile soil of Rome, Hegel suggests, because life there was depraved: nothing survived the individual, and death must have been terrifying.⁹⁸ To be free, people need to recognize that they are part of a totality that transcends their ephemeral existence. This can occur with the recognition of being part of a state with a shared ethical substance, which Hegel characterizes as a “definite” as opposed to an abstract spirit. The essence of this definite unity is represented as God in religion; it has other representations in art, and is understood still in other ways through philosophy.⁹⁹

Hegel wants us to see that objectively the state is a commitment in which we are at home and free regardless of our particular differences. But we need also a subjective conviction that the state is our

home, and that is something religion can provide.¹⁰⁰ For “the people,” for whom this subjective conviction does not exist in the form of thought and principles—an actually existing religion may be needed to harmonize one’s inner sentiments of freedom with the laws and practices of one’s community.¹⁰¹ Not just any religion will do, though. Here Hegel has in mind the true disassociated Christianity that is founded upon the principle of subjectivity or self-consciousness of freedom.¹⁰² But subjective conviction needn’t assume the form of religious belief or faith. Hegel says in his lecture notes on *Rph* §270 that religion is not necessary for integration into the state and that the “best means of effecting this is through philosophical insight into the essence of the state, though, in default of that, a religious frame of mind may lead to the same result.”¹⁰³ In point of time, Hegel says, religion is necessary as the form of consciousness in which the absolute Idea is first apprehended (Hegel, 1971, §552, 289); but I take Hegel to mean nothing more by this than that the true form of Christianity was at one point historically necessary for the development of the modern state. In the modern state, an individual with philosophical insight but who rejects the religious form of consciousness can be at home and free.¹⁰⁴

Indeed, Hegel thinks relying on religion alone and not philosophy is dangerous: those who “seek the Lord” and “assure themselves, in their uneducated opinion, that they possess everything immediately instead of undertaking the work of raising their subjectivity to cognition of the truth and knowledge of objective right and duty, can produce nothing but folly, outrage, and the destruction of all ethical relations”; or they can turn inward, which results in passivity.¹⁰⁵

Hegel envisions religion endorsing the state and encouraging service to the community.¹⁰⁶ And he envisions the state using religion to instill into citizens trust and a disposition of ethical behavior.¹⁰⁷ The state cannot issue laws requiring citizens to be moral—“they would be improper, contradictory, and laughable”—and religion can produce this disposition. It can do so “through moral motives or through terrorizing the imagination and consequentially, the will.”¹⁰⁸ That religion can “terrorize” is one reason Hegel is cautious about its excessive entanglement with the state. Nevertheless, Hegel does say the state has its foundation in religion.

But it is not paradoxical for him to defend a consecrated state while insisting church and state be separate. For Hegel, commitment to and freedom in the state requires citizens to recognize the state as the univer-

sal spirit of which they are a part, and to thereby answer the existential question of how one's existence has meaning given that it inevitably is extinguished. Understanding the state to be consecrated does just this. If philosophy can also provide reasons for seeing one's membership in the state as answering this question, in a way that satisfies atheists, then in Hegel's consecrated state, in contrast to Burke's, they, too, could be at home.

Notes

1. Burke, 1887, 3:353–354.
2. Burke, 1999, 4:2.15.
3. Burke, 1887, 3:351.
4. Burke, 1887, 3:362.
5. Burke, 1887, 3:353–354.
6. Burke, 1887, 3:357.
7. McConnell, 1995, 400.
8. Burke, 1887, 3:355.
9. Burke, 1887, 3:358–359.
10. *Rph* §§270, 292, 303.
11. Hegel, 1997, 64.
12. Hegel, 1997, 65.
13. Hegel, 1997, 65–66. Cf. *TW* 16, 236, and Hegel, 1971, §552.
14. Hegel, 1997, 64; see Rousseau, 1987, 164.
15. See Tunick, 1992, chap. 3.
16. *TW* 12:70; cf. Hegel, 1997, 64.
17. See Suter, 1971; and Franco, 1999, 127.
18. Burke, 1887, 332–333.
19. *Rph* Preface, 11. (Page numbers for *Rph* refer to Hegel 1991.)
20. Suter, 1971, 72; Riedel, 1984; Ritter, 1984.
21. *Rph* §106. Cf. Tunick, 1992, 71–72, 83–84.
22. *Rph* §26.
23. Hegel, 1971, §552, 283, referring to a religion with a “genuine content” involving the idea of a divine spirit indwelling in self-consciousness (283) that is discerned by philosophy (285).
24. Jaeschke, 1981, 141–143.
25. Hegel, 1997, 64–65.
26. Burke, 1887, 3:265.
27. *TW* 16, 237. Cf. *Rph* §281A; Yack, 1980, 710–711; Avineri, 1972, 187.
28. *TW* 16, 238.

29. Brown, 2009.

30. See *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577 (1992); and *Edwards v. Aguillard*, 482 U.S. 578 (1987).

31. "Speech on the Acts of Uniformity, Feb. 6, 1772"; discussed in McConnell, 1995, 408, 416–418.

32. This is at least the position taken by McConnell, 1995, 412, 438. He relies largely on Burke's "Letter to William Burgh" of February 9, 1775, and "Speech on Dormant Claims of the Church," February 17, 1772.

33. *Rph* §270; cf. *TW* 16:242–243; Avineri, 1972, 17–18.

34. Hegel, 1948. While this is an early work in which Hegel has not yet developed his mature political philosophy (cf. Ormiston, 2004), I agree with Avineri that Hegel's views on the relationship between religion and the state remain stable between the early and late periods (see Avineri, 1972, 30–32). On the stability of Hegel's political philosophy generally over time see Tunick, 1992, 92–93.

35. Hegel, 1948, 86–87.

36. *Rph* §§75, 258.

37. See *Rph* §§106–107, 118, 132, 260, on the "right of subjectivity."

38. Hegel, 1948, 118.

39. Hegel, 1948, 118–121, 123–124; Hegel, 1986, 14, 27; cf. Avineri, 31.

40. Hegel, 1948, 112–113.

41. Hegel, 1948, 135.

42. *Rph* §270, 299.

43. *Rph* §§5, 270 (293, 304).

44. *Rph* §270, 300 n.

45. *Rph* §270, 301, 304.

46. *TW* 16, 239–240.

47. *TW* 16, 241; cf. Dickey, 1987.

48. Hegel, "The German Constitution," in Hegel, 1964, 193; cf. 189–193 generally.

49. Hegel, 1948, 109.

50. Hegel, 1948, 109.

51. Hegel, 1948, 111–112, my emphasis.

52. See Avineri, 1972, 29–30, drawing on Hegel, 1948, 115, 133–134. Hegel does think it important, though, to make the historical or philosophical study of religion a part of a Gymnasium curriculum.

53. *Rph* §187, 225–226.

54. *Rph* §§192–198.

55. MacKenzie, 1971, 160–161, 164, 169; translating Hegel's first and third Gymnasium addresses.

56. *Rph* §153.

57. *Rph* §239. This passage occurs in the section “civil society” prior to Hegel’s introduction of the state, and so Hegel says “society” may compel parents; but this happens through enforcement of state laws.

58. MacKenzie, 1971, 175: “Education to independence demands that young people should be accustomed early to consult their own sense of propriety and their own reason”—from Hegel’s third Gymnasium address.

59. Hegel, 1948, 114.

60. Hegel, 1948, 115.

61. Hegel, 1948, 106–107.

62. Hegel, 1948, 115 (my italics).

63. Hegel, 1948, 116.

64. Hegel, 1997, 65: “man must be educated to religion.”

65. MacKenzie, 1971, 31, 42–43, 170.

66. Ibid. In Hegel, 1986, prepared for instruction of Gymnasium students, Hegel’s references to religion are limited. He emphasizes that religion must be chosen (14, 27) and that cognition of God is not above Reason (53).

67. Hegel, 1948, 116.

68. Hegel, 1984, 194–195, 210 (Letter 146, February 20, 1809; and Letter 156, May 11, 1810).

69. *Rph* §270, 295 (my translation).

70. See Hegel, 1948, 127, 129.

71. Hegel, 1971, §552, 284.

72. Hegel, 1971, §552, 286; cf. 287. Jaeschke argues that Hegel shifts his view on the relation of religion and state between *Rph* (1821) and *Philosophy of Mind* (1827), a position I address later in note 104.

73. See *Sherbert v. Verner*, 374 U.S. 398 (1963).

74. *Frank v. Alaska*, 604 P. 2d 1068 (1979).

75. *Lukumi Babalu Aye v. Hialeah*, 508 U.S. 520 (1993).

76. *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925); *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972).

77. *Bowen v. Roy*, 476 U.S. 693 (1986).

78. *People v. Singh*, 516 N.Y.S. 2d 412 (1987).

79. *Potter v. Murray City*, 760 F. 2d 1065 (1985), 1070; cf. *Reynolds v. U.S.*, 98 U.S. 145 (1878).

80. “Letter to Langrishe” (January 3, 1792), in Burke, 1999, vol. 4; “Speech on a Bill for Relief of Protestant Dissenters” (March 17, 1773), in Burke, 1887, 7:29; “Tract Relative to the Laws against Popery in Ireland,” in Burke 1887, 6:299; cf. McConnell, 1995, 402–403, 410–412.

81. “Letter to Richard Burke,” in Burke, 1887, 6:395.

82. “Bill for Relief,” in Burke, 1887, 7:36–37; cf. McConnell, 1995, 453–456.

83. See Hegel, 1984, 196.

84. *Rph* §270, 295 and n.
85. *Rph* §270, 296.
86. *Rph* §270, 296–297. Cf. Hegel, 1948, 104.
87. *TW* 16, 241–242.
88. Knowles, 2002, 321. However, a few scholars read Hegel as himself an atheist, see Hegel, 1988, 21–22, 29; and Solomon, 1983, 582.
89. *Rph* §270, 295.
90. Burke, 1887, 3:108.
91. McConnell, 1995, 424–425.
92. Hegel, 1988, 195–196.
93. Hegel, 1988, 195–196. Hegel has doubts that the modern Germans have a similar shared *Paideia* to draw from; see “Is Judaea, Then, the Teutons’ Fatherland?,” Hegel, 1948, 149; and Avineri, 1972, 22.
94. *Rph* §344.
95. Hegel, 1988, 195, n. 180.
96. *Rph* §270, 295; *Rph* §209; Avineri, 1972, 46; and Tunick, 2001.
97. Hegel, 1983, 247–248; and Tunick, 2001.
98. Avineri, 1972, 26, citing Hegel, 1948, 157.
99. Hegel, 1997, 66.
100. Cf. *TW* 16, 243 (“das Innere, welches gerade der Boden der Religion ist”).
101. *TW* 16, 244–245.
102. Jaeschke, 1981, 144.
103. *Rph* §270A, 303, cited in Jaeschke, 1981, 131. Cf. *TW* 16, 242; and Knowles, 2002, 321.
104. Jaeschke argues that Hegel alters his views on the relation between state and religion between the 1821 publication of *Rph* and *Philosophy of Mind* (1827). In 1821 Hegel sees religion and state as separate; in 1827 he emphasizes the substantial connection between religion and ethical life (132). But even if Jaeschke is right that Hegel shifts his view, this does not undermine my position that Hegel rejects an establishment of religion. Nor does it affect my view that for Hegel an atheist can be at home in the modern state. For Jaeschke, Hegel’s final view is that both the state and the true version of Christianity are founded on one concept: subjectivity, or the self-consciousness of freedom (137, 141). Jaeschke recognizes that the state’s Christian character does not depend on “the internality of a religious faith. This subjectivity is only accessible to the speculative philosophy of right” (142). Insofar as atheists can adopt the principle of subjectivity by drawing on speculative philosophy, they can be at home in the state.
105. *Rph* §270, 294ff.
106. *Rph* §270, 294ff.
107. Hegel, 1948, 121.
108. Hegel, 1948, 98.

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The State as a “Temple of Human Freedom”¹

Hegel on Religion and Politics

Rachel Bayefsky

1. Introduction

The topic of this essay is Hegel’s understanding of the relationship between religion and politics as manifested in the “rational state” that Hegel outlines in the *Philosophy of Right*. This topic is a subset of a much wider and long-standing debate about the role of religion, particularly of Christianity, in Hegel’s philosophy. Although my analysis will address issues in the wider debate, my particular task will be to analyze the interplay between religious beliefs and institutions, on the one hand, and Hegel’s rational state, on the other. I hope that doing so will both contribute to an understanding of Hegel’s political philosophy and draw attention to a complex and nuanced attempt to wrestle with the relationship between religion and politics.

Hegel's views on the intersection of religion and politics seem to challenge common dichotomies between religion and reason, and between religious and secular states. According to Hegel, political freedom rests on the fundamentally Christian insight, purified in the Protestant Reformation, that each human being possesses a free will and moral personality.² Thus Hegel states in his lectures on the philosophy of history that "states and Laws are nothing else than Religion manifesting itself in the relations of the actual world,"³ and explains in his lectures on the philosophy of religion that "In general, religion and the foundation of the state are one and the same thing. . . . There is *one* concept of freedom in [both] religion and the state."⁴ Yet Hegel notes that the laws of the state that he describes in the *Philosophy of Right* are based on rational thought, not authority and faith.⁵ Religious doctrines and institutions therefore have no authority to challenge state policy.⁶ For Hegel, the state's incorporation of both a religious foundation and a "rational" political structure yields what he calls a "reconciliation" of religion and reason, one which removes "the discord between the inner life of the heart and the actual world."⁷

The question that remains after Hegel's attempted "reconciliation," however, is the status of religion *qua* religion—with its characteristic beliefs, practices, and communities—in the Hegelian rational state. How should church and state actually interact? Does religion play an important role in citizens' lives? If so, can Hegel ensure that religious claims are never justified in taking precedence over rational state law? Broadly, the issue is how Christianity, which Hegel considers the bearer of moral freedom, relates to the political structures that develop out of religious truth.

Hegel's writings on the relationship between religion and the state have attracted increased interest in recent years.⁸ Here I will respond in particular to a suggestion made by Charles Taylor and Adriaan Peperzak: that Christian faith serves as a necessary source of support for the Hegelian state. According to Taylor, the state has need of religion in order to reconcile, in each citizen's consciousness, the objective structures of modern life with the eternal progression of free spirit.⁹ Religious faith assures citizens that the state, as the locus of this reconciliation, is worthy of loyalty: as Taylor writes, "since our allegiance to the state is partly predicated on our sense that it is grounded in the Absolute, *Sittlichkeit* pre-supposes a healthy religious life."¹⁰ Peperzak suggests that religion gives citizens access to a higher form of knowledge than can be found in the workings of objective institutions of *Sittlichkeit* or "ethical life."¹¹ Religion shows people that the state deserves respect as the worldly

actualization of religious insight, thereby encouraging citizens to have "faith that the state is led by divine providence."¹²

In my view, the suggestion that religion serves to support the Hegelian state is correct but insufficient; the crucial question for Hegel is which *kind* of religion is able to serve such a role and how such a form of religion comes about. I intend to argue that Hegel's views on the relationship between religion and the state center on his understanding of what he considers to be "true religion" (a form of Protestantism): the inward recognition of subjective freedom based on the reconciliation of the religious conscience with God. I will claim that in Hegel's scheme, the institutions of the rational state help to shape a form of "true religion" so that the religious conscience can recognize the state as a "spiritual" realm in which human freedom can be realized. Turning Taylor's formulation around, a "healthy religious life" presupposes the flourishing of the rational state.

The idea that Hegel's "true religion" is partially shaped by the state may seem to reduce Hegelian religion to a humanistic endeavor designed to accomplish political aims and lacking independent religious value. It may even raise the possibility that religious beliefs and practices are merely tools in the service of state authority. I will argue, however, that despite the state's role in shaping "true religion," Hegel does not reduce the value of religion to its ability to encourage loyalty or good citizenship.

My analysis will be confined to the views expressed during Hegel's "Berlin period" on the relationship between religion and state. In particular, I will draw on the *Philosophy of Right* as well as later lectures and writings of Hegel, including his lectures on the philosophy of history, his lectures on the philosophy of religion, and the third edition of the *Encyclopedia*. Some commentators, such as Walter Jaeschke, have suggested that Hegel's understanding of the relationship between religion and politics changed between the publication of the *Philosophy of Right* and the third edition of the *Encyclopedia*. Although Hegel's emphases in these texts may be different, I believe that with regard to the relationship between church and state, the discontinuities are not as significant as Jaeschke suggests, and I will note the reasons for this view where relevant.

2. Hegel's "True Religion"

To begin, then, I want to discuss Hegel's concept of "true religion" and its general relationship to ethical life. For Hegel, "true" or "genuine" religion

is characterized by the fact that, as he writes in the *Encyclopedia*, “the idea of God it knows . . . is the true and real”¹³—which Hegel considers to be “free spirit.”¹⁴ Hegel believes that the true idea of God is expressed by Christianity and by Protestantism in particular. The Christian Incarnation, according to Hegel, emancipated the human free will by showing that man has infinite value in himself.¹⁵ The Reformation purified Christianity by recovering the original core idea of individual reconciliation with God through an act of freedom.¹⁶ As Hegel remarks on Protestantism in his lectures on the philosophy of religion, “Human beings are not passive in [relation to] divine grace; they are essentially involved in it with their subjective freedom, and the moment of subjective freedom is expressly required in their knowledge, volition, and faith.”¹⁷

Hegel’s “true religion” is therefore a form of Protestantism—which Hegel views, in turn, as the most adequate expression of the truth of Christianity. In particular, Hegel sees Lutheran Protestantism as embodying the crucial insight of spiritual freedom.¹⁸ In both the *Encyclopedia* and his lectures on the philosophy of history, Hegel emphasizes the Lutheran emphasis on free acts of faith as distinct from Catholic “spiritual bondage.”¹⁹ Hegel does not, however, directly identify “true religion” with any particular contemporary form of Protestant Christianity. In fact, he is critical of certain tendencies in the Protestant religiosity of his own day.²⁰ Hegel’s position seems to be that “true religion” is the principle animating contemporary forms of Protestantism, even if it is not fully developed in them. He writes in the *Encyclopedia* that “in the Protestant conscience the principles of the religious and of the ethical conscience come to be one and the same: the free spirit learning to see itself in its reasonableness and truth.”²¹ The emergence of “true religion” appears to be the result of a process of moral development, but its possibility fundamentally relies on what Hegel sees as the crucial Protestant valorization of subjective freedom in faith.

In Hegel’s writings, the relationship between “true religion” and a form of “ethical life” based on freedom runs both ways.²² Hegel believes that Protestantism has social consequences: it endorses marriage, work, and individual judgment instead of extolling celibacy, poverty, and obedience.²³ For Hegel, a Protestant culture serves as the only possible ground for a state that can provide citizens with freedom realized in life²⁴—the kind of state that he outlines in the *Philosophy of Right*. At the same time, Hegel holds that “true religion” itself emerges from a particular moral, social, and political outlook, which Hegel calls the “ethical spirit.” He

writes in the *Encyclopedia*: "outside the ethical spirit therefore it is vain to seek for true religion and religiosity."²⁵ Hegel supports the claim that the development of true religion requires ethical life in two steps: first, Hegel endorses Kant's progression from morality to religion. Second, Hegel seeks to supersede Kant's understanding of this progression by replacing Kantian morality and religion with their Hegelian counterparts.

First, Hegel explains that Kant was correct to hold that belief in God starts with practical reason, the realm of morality—which, Hegel writes, "contains the material or content which constitutes the content of the notion of God,"²⁶ or "free spirit."²⁷ Like Kant, Hegel wants to ensure that religion's basic truth is that of the fundamental importance of the free will as the agent of a genuine moral existence.²⁸ Hegel's conception of religion therefore depends on his conception of morality, and here Hegel seeks to supersede Kant. Hegel criticizes Kant for conceiving of an overly abstract idea of God because he starts from too abstract an idea of morality. According to Hegel, Kant's morality involves merely the empty command to follow the categorical imperative—a command whose meaning and import for our lives in the world remain unknown.²⁹ Kant's God is therefore only postulated, according to Hegel, as an "ought"³⁰—that is, as a necessary condition for the possibility of pursuing moral aims—instead of as a living reality whose free essence human beings can actually grasp.

Hegel contends that morality can be grounded only in *Sittlichkeit*: social and political structures that bring together morality and personal satisfaction, or what he calls "the good and the subjective will."³¹ The religion associated with a morality grounded in *Sittlichkeit* is supposed to provide us with a guide for fulfillment in the world. For Hegel, religion should not leave us gazing at the starry heavens above and striving to realize a model of moral perfection that is impossible in our current earthly lives. Instead, Hegel's version of what he calls the mind's "elevation to God" involves the "purification, *actually* accomplished in the ethical world, whereby its conscience is purged of subjective opinion and its will freed from the selfishness of desire."³² We can *actually*—and only—approach a true understanding of God in the "ethical world." That is, our lives in the realms of family, civil society, and the state purify our intentions and implant a sense of rectitude to a sufficient extent that we are able to conceive of God in a way that allows us to become conscious of our moral freedom, instead of falling into superstition and servitude. For Hegel, then, the structures of *Sittlichkeit* serve as the ground for the concrete development of "true religion."

3. True Religion and Inwardness

Hegel considers the inward dimension of religiosity to be particularly important for the relationship between religion and the state. The reconciliation of the individual and God involved in genuine religiosity takes place in each individual's inmost consciousness, and so, as Hegel remarks in the *Philosophy of Right*, "the field of religion . . . is inwardness."³³ The interior religious conscience, according to Hegel, is inviolable; the Protestant Reformation laid down a "right of inwardness" that no external authority, including the government, is authorized to contravene.³⁴ In his lectures on the philosophy of religion, Hegel states that the individual's conscience, "as something sacred," is considered "inviolable."³⁵ But Hegel also sees a dark side to intense moments of individual religious experience. Hegel notes that religious experience is abstract and general; in the *Philosophy of Right* he indicates that "inwardness does not develop reasons and is not accountable to itself."³⁶ Hegel warns that religious interiority turns into fanaticism if it applies the same totalizing energy to worldly relations.

The question, then, is how Hegel is able to maintain a moment of inwardness free from external intervention, while at the same time integrating the individual consciousness into a world in which reasonable responses instead of intense spiritual concentration will justifiably be demanded. This question is by no means a problem special to Hegel: it is a crucial dilemma of the modern world. When society embraces the presence of an inviolable realm of interiority in each of its members—when it considers its embrace of inwardness to be a characteristic part of its self-definition—how can it ensure that individuals remain bound to moral standards and political obligations that can ground a robust social existence?

The problem acquires particular urgency in the context of a defense of a certain type of religious faith. If religion, as Hegel believes, really is a way to grasp absolute truth—as he suggests in the *Philosophy of Right* and elsewhere³⁷—then the moment of true religious inwardness cannot be written off as an irrational delusion. Religion for Hegel is too important for the state to regard as irrelevant: he writes in the *Philosophy of Right* that "as intuition, feeling, and representational cognition whose concern is with God as the unlimited foundation and cause on which everything depends, [religion] contains the requirement that everything else . . . should receive confirmation, justification, and the assurance of

certainty from this source."³⁸ Put another way, as Hegel states in the *Encyclopedia*, "principles of civil freedom can be but abstract and superficial, and political institutions deduced from them must be, if taken alone, untenable, so long as those principles in their wisdom mistake religion so much as not to know that the maxims of the reason in actuality have their last and supreme sanction in the religious conscience in subsumption under the consciousness of 'absolute' truth."³⁹

So if the religious conscience cannot support the institutions of the rational state, Hegel faces the pragmatic danger that religious fanaticism may try to take over the government. But he also faces the grave philosophical danger that the modern state, despite all Hegel's efforts, cannot meet the deepest aspirations of the human spirit, and that the religious conscience should turn elsewhere for a source of ultimate satisfaction, and of ultimate authority.

It is correct to note as Taylor and Peperzak do, then, that Hegel wants "true religion" to support the state.⁴⁰ But the crucial question is *how* "the right kind of piety," which involves a religious conscience centered on inwardness, can support an objective, rational order. Hegel notes in the *Philosophy of Right* that "it is philosophical insight which recognizes that Church and state are not opposed to each other as far as their *content* is concerned, which is truth and rationality, but merely differ in form."⁴¹ According to Hegel, however, philosophical insight into the essence of the state is not widely available.⁴² How, then, can people with their religious consciences realize that the state is a spiritual realm?

For Hegel, the question of how the religious conscience can recognize the value of ethical life is closely related to the question of how the rational state can shape "true religion." "True religion" accepts and spiritualizes ethical life;⁴³ it does not dismiss the state as a profane realm and go looking off into a "beyond." Hegel's way to make room for religious interiority without weakening the state is to provide a mechanism within the bounds of the state for religion of the "true" variety to develop. This mechanism has two main components: first, the content of religious experience has social implications. Secondly, Hegel uses the church-state relationship to bridge the gap between religious inwardness and public life.

First, then, Hegelian religious inwardness is a social virtue. In becoming conscious of *my* own free will, I become conscious of my free will *qua* human being and, therefore, conscious of everyone else's free will, for as Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of Right*, "I am apprehended

as a *universal* person, in which [respect] *all* are identical.”⁴⁴ But the consciousness of the universality of personhood despite particular characteristics—without the abolition of particular characteristics—is also the principle underlying the Hegelian state. Hegel notes in his lectures on the philosophy of history that “a tranquil confidence in the [Honorable] Disposition of men,” which he believes to be the preserve of the Protestant world, constitutes “one and the same thing with Religion” and “the fountain of all equitable arrangements that prevail with regard to private right and the constitution of the State.”⁴⁵ For Hegel, the favorable disposition toward others that supports just political arrangements expresses a core religious truth, the recognition of each person’s freedom. So what Hegel calls religion “of a genuine kind” has significant social consequences *because* it is an interior experience—that is, religious inwardness that allows for the recognition of subjective freedom.

4. Church and State

The second aspect of the bridge between religious interiority and public life is the institutional relationship between church and state in the Hegelian state. This relationship helps to shape a form of the religious conscience suited to valuing freedom in the rational state. Hegel’s view, expressed in section 270 of the *Philosophy of Right*, seems to be as follows. If churches promote “true religion,” then they can play a productive and important role in bringing citizens to a consciousness of their freedom. The state, in its dealings with churches, must therefore seek to ensure that churches promote “true religion,” as opposed to superstition or fanaticism of the kind that places the human spirit in fetters.

How can the Hegelian state accomplish this goal? First, the state must insist on a clear delineation of religious and political life in terms of their “form.” The state—which according to Hegel possesses secure rational justification⁴⁶—sets authoritative law and social policy. The churches provide a place for the inwardness of the religious conscience. Despite this delineation of tasks, so to speak, Hegel does not endorse any kind of “separation” between church and state. Hegel’s claim is that religion and politics differ in their form but not in their content—which is, in both cases, the truth that each human being is free and in possession of a moral personality.

In order to make it clear to citizens that religion and politics are related in this very fundamental way, the Hegelian state envelops churches in state structures. Hegel writes that "if the religion in question is of a genuine kind" and "acknowledges and endorses [the state], it will also have a *status* and *expression* of its own."⁴⁷ This "status" involves religious institutions receiving state support "in the pursuit of [their] religious end."⁴⁸ Hegel gives the church the status of a "corporation" with property and employees, beholden to state laws such as those governing property relations. He even writes that the state should require its citizens to belong to a religious community, "since religion is that moment which integrates the state at the deepest level of the disposition [of citizens]."⁴⁹ This requirement may appear totalitarian, but we should note that Hegel adds, "but to any community they please." Hegel seems to believe that he is not imposing a large burden on citizens but rather providing a productive channel within the state for inevitable and desirable religious inclinations.

The church-state relationship thus serves to recognize churches as meaningful institutions with ends complementary to those of the state. At the same time, this relationship shapes the activities of churches in the direction of "true religion." Church functionaries, Hegel contends, should not view their duties to the church as separate from their duties to the state. This demand serves as a warning to religious leaders not to conceive of the state as a "fallen" realm removed from a higher, religious life, but as a realm worthy of respect. Furthermore, in bringing churches under its wing, the state gains a certain measure of control over their activities. Churches are barred from dictating state policy and encouraged to focus on developing interior religious experience. In particular, Hegel approves the state's right to assert its principles over those of churches that claim "unlimited and unconditional *authority*."⁵⁰ Such churches tyrannize over their own members, thereby frustrating the aim of true religion, which is the recognition of freedom.⁵¹ Thus the apparent subservience of the churches in the area of authoritative decision-making is intended not to quash religion, but to ensure the churches' religiosity—as Hegel conceives of it.

The incorporation of the church into state structures helps to answer the question of how Hegel expects people with full faith in religious interiority to recognize the value of public life. The relationship between church and state shows people that as members of religious communities,

they remain citizens of the rational state. Church leaders see themselves partially as public servants; church property is regulated by state law; church ceremonies give their imprimatur to ethical moments recognized by the state, such as marriage. Church members therefore receive assurances from within the very structure of the religious community that “true religion” supports, and does not oppose, the state.

Walter Jaeschke in “Christianity and Secularity in Hegel’s Concept of the State” suggests that the *Philosophy of Right* depicts a “separation between church and state,” and “a duplication of conscience into a religious and an autonomous ethical conscience.”⁵² According to Jaeschke, Hegel conceived of the reconciliation of the state and religion only later in the 1820s—particularly in the third edition of the *Encyclopedia*. But the picture that emerges from the *Philosophy of Right* is not one of separation between church and state; it is one of church and state involved in a differentiated yet symbiotic relationship. For Hegel, religion can support the state, but only a particular *kind* of religion, which Hegel considers to be “true religion”; and this *kind* of religion is itself developed and shaped within rational state structures.

5. Hegel on Religious Minorities

Hegel’s views on religious minorities provide additional support for the notion that citizenship in the rational state can shape a particular outlook on religion and its relationship to the state. The presence of non-Protestants in the rational state might seem to present a stark problem for Hegel, given that he believes, as he states in his lectures on the philosophy of religion, that “conviction” is “the ultimate safeguard” for the stability of the state.⁵³ If Catholics, for instance, remain enslaved in their innermost souls to priestly authority and otherworldly “sanctity,” as Hegel seems to suggest in the *Encyclopedia*, can they ever be full citizens of the rational state?

In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel writes that the state should allow people to belong to “any community they please.” He then takes up the question of how to treat religious minorities whose religious beliefs conflict with their acceptance of state institutions, such as Quakers and Anabaptists who refuse to take oaths and serve in the military. He notes that the state can tolerate such communities, but “only if the state is strong in other respects.”⁵⁴ Members of such communities do not seem

to be full citizens in the rational state: Hegel writes that "since they do not recognize their duties toward [the state], they cannot claim the right to belong to it."⁵⁵ Hegel then advocates granting civil rights to the Jews, even though they can be seen as members of a foreign nation. Since the Jews are "primarily *human beings*," granting them legal recognition provides a "root, infinite and free from all other influences," which can grow into what Hegel calls the "desired assimilation in terms of attitude and disposition."⁵⁶

For Hegel, religious differences have political consequences. In the *Encyclopedia*, as part of his argument about why a free state must be built on a Protestant foundation, Hegel contends that the inmost beliefs of the people are relevant to the workings of the state, because state functionaries will act according to their religious beliefs,⁵⁷ and he makes similar comments in his lectures on the philosophy of religion.⁵⁸ These comments suggest that beliefs departing from the "true" religion present an obstacle to full membership in the rational state. Yet in these passages Hegel is arguing that a free state cannot be realized in a widespread Catholic culture. In the rational state, which is built on a generally Protestant foundation and which is intended to be "strong," Hegel does not see the citizenship of Catholics or other minorities as alarming.

Why not? One plausible answer is to appeal to the rational state's power to encourage the development—in a "true" direction—of the religious lives of its inhabitants. Hegel's discussion of granting civil rights to the Jews, for instance, suggests an interest in the development of the Jewish religious outlook. According to Hegel, the state's recognition of the equal freedom of the Jews would lead to the Jews' own recognition of themselves as free—and as "human beings" who share an essential connection to other citizens, instead of being exclusively bound to a particular nation engaging in religious practices outside the civil sphere. Such a changed outlook would bring the Jewish religious outlook closer in line with the free self-consciousness that, for Hegel, lies at the heart of "true religion"—which, moreover, is specifically linked to Protestantism. Indeed, for Hegel, the recognition by individuals that they are free and that their freedom can be realized in the world is a crucial part of Protestantism. So Hegel's "desired assimilation in terms of attitude and disposition" seems to amount to a certain degree of "Protestantization."⁵⁹

Minorities are accepted in the Hegelian state, then, not because the state equally respects the values of alternate religious communities. They are accepted with a set of ground rules: the state must be either

strong enough to ignore a limited number of subversive religious claims by people who do not seem to be counted as full citizens, or the state must be able to integrate minorities as full citizens with the expectation that their attitudes toward the state and themselves will evolve accordingly. This may or may not be a good way of dealing with the issue of religious pluralism. The point here is only that the structures of Hegel's rational state—which incorporate a commitment to universal individual freedom—can play a role in shaping religious attitudes in what Hegel considers to be a more “true” direction.

6. What Is *Religious* about Hegel's Reconciliation?

My interpretation of Hegel's church-state relationship may seem to undermine the authenticity of religion in the Hegelian state. If it is correct to say that “true religion” for Hegel must be developed and shaped by state structures, then it seems that religion answers ultimately to political and not divine imperatives. In other words, the standard guiding Hegelian religion may seem to be not God's truth, but human needs and creations.

It could be argued, for instance, that Hegel sees religion merely as a prop for state authority, as a tool to encourage a favorable “disposition” toward the state, with no independent religious value. Hegel certainly does believe that religiosity aids individuals' attachment to the state.⁶⁰ But in the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel rejects the view that “whereas the state had an independent existence of its own . . . religion was a later addition, something desirable perhaps for strengthening the political bulwarks, but purely subjective in individuals,”⁶¹ and he dismisses in his lectures on the philosophy of history the idea that religion needs to be brought into the state “by buckets and bushels” in order to be “impressed upon people's hearts.”⁶² Rather, Hegel states that “it is quite true that men must be trained to religion, but not as to something whose existence has yet to begin.”⁶³ This statement seems to convey the point that religion does not come into existence for political purposes. For Hegel, religion does not function as a mere means to bolster an already formed political disposition; it provides some of the content of the political disposition. That is, religion helps to bring people to greater consciousness of their freedom and the freedom of everyone else in the rational state. In becoming conscious of their freedom through religion, Hegelian citizens realize the ultimate value of the rational state and are *therefore* more inclined to

support it. In other words, "true religion" is good for the Hegelian state only because it is true.

Put another way, Hegel does not define Christianity as "whatever is necessary for people to have a favorable disposition toward the rational state": he conceives of Christianity, in its Protestant form, as the subjective reconciliation with God that assures each person of his essential freedom.⁶⁴ The state is rational, and thereby deserving of the allegiance of free citizens, *because* it represents the realization of Christian principles, purified through the Protestant Reformation.

Perhaps a more fundamental criticism of Hegel is that his brand of religiosity is not especially religious at all. If religion is all about the recognition of the freedom of oneself and others, is religiosity not merely reducible to good citizenship in the rational state?

First, although Hegel values a form of religion that is amenable to worldly life in the rational state, he does not thereby eliminate religion *qua* religion, with its characteristic representational forms. It may quite plausibly be argued that Hegel's God, when grasped philosophically, is not the God of orthodox Christianity. As Taylor and Peperzak point out, the core Christian concepts of divine love and grace do not carry their traditional meanings in Hegel's philosophical system.⁶⁵ Hegel makes clear, however, that the philosophical understanding of God is not the only acceptable one. He states in his lectures on the philosophy of history that "Philosophy is not opposed to religion; it grasps it in concepts. But for the absolute Idea, for absolute Spirit, the form of religion must be; for religion is the form of the consciousness of what is truly so as this consciousness is for all men."⁶⁶

Hegel, then, does not lose sight of the fact that Christianity is a religion that must be recognized by religious people as such. For Hegel, part of the importance of religion lies in its universality: it is the consciousness of truth as it is "for all men." From a philosophical standpoint, Hegel views the religious understanding of concepts such as grace and divine love as incomplete and therefore inadequate. Yet Hegelian citizens still carry out traditional religious practices, and Hegel makes no effort to embark on a philosophical reeducation program.

Mark Lilla in *The Stillborn God* agrees that the Hegelian state cannot provide a secular substitute for religious faith, but nevertheless argues that religion experiences a form of emaciation as Protestant ethics are assimilated into the mores of the rational state. The deep yearnings of religious faith, Lilla contends, are replaced by a state in which

people fulfill their social functions in a “sensible, well-designed bourgeois home.”⁶⁷ Religious communities take a subservient role, as Protestantism becomes the animating principle of all of ethical life rather than the carefully facilitated encounter with God in religious communities. For Hegel, Lilla contends, “to be a modern human being is thus to be a *de facto* Protestant.”⁶⁸

Hegel, however, does not reduce religiosity to citizenship. For Hegel, the distinction between religiosity and citizenship, which requires the continuing robustness of each, is a crucial component of modern freedom. Hegel notes in his lectures on the philosophy of religion that “in the patriarchal condition and the Jewish theocracy, [religion and the state] are not yet distinct and are still outwardly identical.”⁶⁹ In the modern Protestant world, however, people realize that religion and the state are *inwardly* identical—both are centrally concerned with freedom⁷⁰—but they take on different outward forms: inwardness and worldly life, respectively. The “Protestantization” of ethical life results in the emergence of a sphere of religious inwardness which enables the individual reconciliation with God, just as it results in a state that serves as the locus of free political and social action.

Hegel seems to be suggesting that free people in the modern world can both undergo moments of complete religious “inwardness” and live public lives without seeing themselves as endlessly divided. In more Hegelian terms, we must distinguish the outward and inward aspects of our personality if we are to reconcile them. Far from reducing religion to good citizenship, Hegel holds the distinction between inward religiosity and outward citizenship—and their simultaneous flourishing—to be an important moment of modern freedom.⁷¹

7. Hegel’s Account and Contemporary Issues

To conclude, I have argued that the structures of Hegel’s rational state help to shape “true religion” so that the insight at the core of Christianity for Hegel—the importance of the free will—can come to the forefront of religious life. Hegel’s account of the relationship between religion and politics raises some points that may be of contemporary interest.

For instance, Hegel disentangles two claims that are sometimes conflated today: that the state has a religious basis—in the Western world, perhaps, that legal traditions are rooted in a “Judeo-Christian

worldview”—and that religious institutions or doctrines should wield some degree of control over state policy. Hegel’s rational state is “based on religion” in the sense that its ultimate justification lies in the Christian insight of subjective freedom. But for Hegel, it is precisely *because* of the state’s religious foundation that religious authorities cannot take over state power. Hegel’s account suggests that there is no inevitable connection between the view that the state’s ultimate justification lies in religion and the view that religious doctrine should direct state law and policy.

Moreover, Hegel considers not only the impact of religion on politics, but also the impact of politics on religious experience. He emphasizes that the state’s position vis-à-vis religious communities can affect the way in which people think about their religion and its relationship to political life. In Hegel’s view, the state should promote the kinds of religious belief and practice that are able to bring citizens to a consciousness of their freedom. Though this view may appear invasive, it prompts the question of whether certain forms of religion are more suited to citizenship in certain kinds of states—for instance, liberal ones—and, if so, how these forms can be encouraged. The more general point is that Hegel does not see religions as static entities either supportive of, or opposed to, the state; religions can evolve in response to social and political configurations.

Finally, Hegel refuses to separate the question of religion’s social efficacy from the question of its truth. For Hegel, “true religion” supports the state, but only because the state has developed out of an important religious truth: the consciousness of each individual’s freedom. Hegel’s position may present a foil, therefore, to those outlooks which—historically and in the contemporary era—involve praising religion for its social effects without taking a position on its deeper meaning.

Hegel presents a perspective on the relationship between religion and politics that is nuanced, sensitive, and skeptical of traditional dichotomies. While the impact that his views might have on contemporary dilemmas is open for debate, it is to be hoped that his perspective will help clarify some of the issues at stake.

Notes

1. *TW* 12, 405.
2. *TW* 12, 405.
3. *TW* 12, 497.

4. *TW* 16, 236ff.

5. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 428.

6. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 425.

7. *TW* 12, 405.

8. See Peperzak, 2001, 627–642; Vieillard-Baron, 2004, 183–208; Lilla, 2008, 163–214; Lilla, 2001, 859–900. Earlier work on Hegel's views about religion and politics includes Peperzak, 1982, 37–76; Jaeschke, 1981, 127–145; Taylor, 1975, 480–509.

9. Taylor, 1975, 483–486. “But what the state inescapably requires, without which it cannot hope for effective reality (*Wirklichkeit*), is some instinctual sense of its rationality, of its irrecusable authority as founded on the Idea, in short some ‘ethical conviction’ (*sittliche Gesinnung*) on the part of its citizens. And this is grounded on religion” (Taylor, 1975, 486).

10. Taylor, 1975, 488.

11. Peperzak, 2001, 622–631.

12. Peperzak, 2001, 623.

13. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 355.

14. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 355.

15. *TW* 12, 403.

16. *TW* 12, 494–497.

17. *TW* 16, 242.

18. This viewpoint is shared by Peperzak and Taylor. Peperzak writes, “Hegel presents his conception of the true religion as the Protestant, and more precisely, the Lutheran understanding of Christianity” (Peperzak, 2001, 632). Taylor identifies “the fully true religion” for Hegel as “Lutheran Protestant Christianity” (Taylor, 1975, 485).

19. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 357, *TW* 12, 495–496.

20. In the *Philosophy of Right*, for instance, Hegel is critical of subjectivism; *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 427. In his lectures on the philosophy of religion, Hegel discusses the potential for authoritarianism in Protestant states (*TW* 16, 238).

21. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 365.

22. This form of mutual dependence is presented in the *Encyclopedia* as governed by certain principles of Hegelian thought. After Hegel indicates that true religion emerges from ethical life, he writes, “But—as is the case with all speculative process—this development of one thing out of another means that what appears as sequel and derivative is rather the absolute *prius* of what it appears to be mediated by, and here in mind is also known as its truth” (*Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 355). More specifically, Hegel writes of “the moral life of the state” and “the religious spirituality of the state” as “reciprocal guarantees of strength” (*Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 365).

23. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 358–359, *TW* 16, 240–241.

24. *TW* 12, 517, "If the constitution and laws are to be founded on a veritable eternal Right, then security is to be found only in the Protestant religion, in whose principle Rational Subjective Freedom also attains development."

25. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 355.

26. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 354.

27. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 355.

28. For Kant's expression of this view, see *AA* 6, 170–171.

29. *Rph* §135 R, *TW* 7, 252–253.

30. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 354.

31. *Rph* §141 R, *TW* 7, 286.

32. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 354.

33. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 430.

34. *TW* 12, 516; the right of "that sphere of inwardness" is also significant in *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 422.

35. *TW* 16, 242.

36. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 431.

37. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 417; *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 360. In his lectures on the philosophy of religion, Hegel states, "Religion is divine knowledge, the knowledge which human beings have of God and of themselves in God. This is divine wisdom and the field of absolute truth" (*TW* 16, 236).

38. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 417.

39. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 360. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel also notes that "it is within [the religious] relationship that the state, laws, and duties all receive their highest endorsement as far as the consciousness is concerned, and become supremely binding upon it" (*Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 417).

40. Taylor, 1975, 505; Peperzak, 2001, 623; see also Soual, 2004, 195.

41. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 425.

42. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 430.

43. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 358–359; *TW* 16, 239–241.

44. *Rph* §209 R, *TW* 7, 360.

45. *TW* 12, 526.

46. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 425–426.

47. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 420.

48. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 420.

49. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 420.

50. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 427.

51. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 430.

52. Jaeschke, 1981, 131f.

53. *TW* 16, 246. Hegel also comments in his lectures on the philosophy of religion that "a people which has a bad concept of God also has a bad state, a bad government, and bad laws" (*TW* 16, 237).

54. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 421.
55. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 421.
56. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 421.
57. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 360.
58. *TW* 16, 244–245.
59. *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7.
60. For instance, in *Rph* §270 R, *TW* 7, 430.
61. *Enc.* §552 R, *TW* 10, 356.
62. *TW* 12, 71.
63. *TW* 12, 71.

64. As Hegel states in his lectures on the philosophy of religion, “religion is knowledge of the highest truth, and this truth, defined more precisely, is *free spirit*. In religion, human beings are free before God. In making their will conform to the divine will, they are not opposed to the divine will but have themselves within it; they are free inasmuch as they have succeeded, in the [religious] cult, in overcoming the division” (*TW* 16, 237). See also Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, *TW* 12, 496.

65. Taylor, 1975, 493; Peperzak, 2001, 626.
66. As translated and quoted by Taylor (Taylor, 1975, 487).
67. Lilla, 2008, 212.
68. Lilla, 2008, 204.
69. *TW* 16, 236.
70. *TW* 16, 236.

71. This point is related to one made by Taylor (Taylor, 1975, 488) to the effect that the difference in scope between the church community and the citizenry of the rational state is, for Hegel, characteristic of modern freedom.

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Religion and the Dialectic of Enlightenment

William Maker

Everybody might be just one big soul, it looks that way to me.

—Woody Guthrie, “Tom Joad”

But this August dignity I treat of, is not the dignity of kings and robes, but that abounding dignity which has no robed investiture. Thou shalt see it shining in the arm that wields a pick or drives a spike; that democratic dignity which, on all hands, radiates without end from God himself! The great God absolute! The center and circumference of all democracy! His omnipresence our divine equality!

—Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or The Whale*

Freedom, just around the corner for you. But with truth so far off, what good will it do?

—Bob Dylan, “Jokerman”

1. Introduction

The chapters of the *Phenomenology* which unfold the dialectic of the Enlightenment period are famous. However, rather than addressing them, I will be employing the notion of a dialectic of enlightenment in an expanded sense. First, I will indicate how the *Phenomenology* as a whole unfolds a larger, more comprehensive dialectic of enlightenment, one which is important for fully understanding Hegel's views on spirit, religion, and religion's role in the secular world and politics. Second, I will consider the tension in Hegel between a positive and a negative view of religion's place in the political. In examining this, I will contend that modernity and religion are still entangled in an unresolved dialectic of enlightenment in that flawed Enlightenment models of subjectivity and freedom continue to dominate contemporary thought and society.¹ My larger theme is that this persistence of the Enlightenment ultimately called Hegel—and should call us—to question his long-held hope that religion could play an ongoing positive role in actualizing secular freedom. Hegel's philosophical conviction that religion could play such a role is an important feature of his understanding of the relation between religion and politics and is the specific aspect of his philosophy of religion I will address. This essay explores the tension between Hegel's *philosophical* understanding of the fulfillment of religion in "consummate religion" and his evaluation of religion as he found it practiced in his day. The latter part of the essay examines some contemporary religious phenomena illustrative of certain features of the role of religion in politics, which also worried Hegel in his own time. I have concentrated on Hegel's complex and nuanced views about the fulfillment of religion in the ethical world and its proper positioning in the arenas of politics and the state and have brought his relevant concerns to bear on some recent events. Thus, this chapter does not present a comprehensive consideration of his philosophy of religion nor of the multiple ways in which contemporary religions appear in the public square. I have offered a broader consideration of his philosophy of religion elsewhere.²

2. The *Phenomenology* as Dialectic of Enlightenment

A definitive component of enlightenment in the broad sense is the insistence that no belief be accepted on faith, without prior justification. It demands that we reject dogmatism by looking critically at our beliefs to see whether they can have their truth demonstrated. As the introduction

to the *Phenomenology* makes clear, consciousness actualizes enlightenment in that its tripartite structure embodies what is needed to effect enlightenment demands. How? To renounce dogmatism by testing the truth of belief requires (1) a subjective belief about what is true, (2) an objective standard against which to measure and test the belief, and (3) a judge who compares the belief against the standard because both fall within its field of awareness. Since consciousness moves through its series of shapes by repeatedly comparing knowledge and standard, the *Phenomenology* as a whole articulates the endeavor of enlightenment. As *we* see however, consciousness confronts an insuperable problem as it strives to complete the project. To be successful, consciousness must get outside of its own subjective awareness to a God's-eye view where it can compare its subjective notion of the truth with the objective standard as found outside itself, independently of the subjective knowing whose capacity to attain objectivity is under adjudication. But, to be *consciousness's* knowing it must also remain within its subjective awareness. Thus, as absolute knowing shows, to attain this God-like state is to be simultaneously within and beyond consciousness. Consequently, the *Phenomenology* demonstrates that attaining enlightenment requires abandoning the philosophy of the subject. It also shows that an unresolved dialectic emerges if we do *not* do so. If one remains committed to the enlightenment assumptions that knowledge is of and by a subject and must be validated, one has two equally unfortunate options: objectivity may be redefined in terms of subjectivity. In this case objectivity *is* directly accessible within my subjective awareness, but must be finally defined in terms of the conditions of subjectivity itself. Or one can postulate objectivity as beyond subjectivity, but as unknowable. (Kant tried unsuccessfully to reconcile both.) As we shall consider later, subsequent to the *Phenomenology's* rejection of these unhappy Enlightenment alternatives, Hegel became convinced that they persisted in the society and the religion of his time. Of course the *Phenomenology* enabled him to overcome the subjectivist dilemma, moving beyond the negative dialectic of enlightenment trapped in the philosophy of the subject.³ We need to consider how he did so because this move is the determining context for his positive conception of rational religion.

3. Beyond Subjectivity

As noted, absolute knowing demonstrates that subjectivity cannot attain legitimacy without transcending itself by obviating the irreducibly fixed

distinction between subject and object. With the elimination of this distinction, the notion of objectivity as residing in what is present for and over and against an awareness is deconstructed. Subject and object can no longer be presupposed as already self-subsistent givens determinatively distinct from one another; indeed they can no longer be assumed to be determinate at all. Thus the indeterminacy with which logic commences. Emerging out of indeterminacy neither being nor nothing are conceived as already determinate in virtue of being objects—fixed and held fast as present to subjectivity. For this reason neither can function as the determining source or ground of the other. Thus being and nothing are *co-determinative*, neither is the primal authority of determination subsuming the other to itself. The abiding lesson which then unfolds in logic is that what is determinate and identifiable is so only in and through a non-reductive relation to an other. Building on the *Phenomenology's* deconstruction of the myth of atomistic subjectivity, logic provides the theoretical and metaphysical legitimation and framework for the whole philosophy of spirit.⁴ It justifies what later emerges as the necessity of mutual recognition as constitutive of subjectivity itself and of freedom as self-determination. It makes possible objective spirit's specification of the various types of interhuman relationships which enable individual and social freedom, where the social dimension of individual freedom is predominantly positive, rather than a necessary evil.

Yet, despite his repudiation of the philosophy of atomistic subjectivity and his insistence on the sociality of freedom, Hegel acknowledges the principle of subjective freedom stressed by the Enlightenment and liberal theory, since he regards it as a hallmark of modernity and an essential, if *incomplete*, component of freedom. He steadfastly affirms the right of subjective choice as necessary, celebrating its significance within the bounds of civil society and its emergence in the liberty of conscience he associates with Protestantism. However, since he established theoretically that subjectivity itself is not a solitary, atomistic achievement, he strove to articulate the necessity of mediation, the need for the self to freely acknowledge, recognize, and involve itself with others. He believed both that modernity's full realization required this philosophical clarification and that his system succeeded where the Enlightenment had failed by demonstrating what was required for freedom to flourish. Famously holding that philosophy can only reflect its own age, he suggested that the requirements for freedom were in place.⁵

However, as freely established by individuals acting together, the structures of mediated freedom require that individuals understand and identify with them; they must both realize and *act* on the realization that their private, subjective freedom is not threatened, but made possible by social interaction. In his analysis of the fulfillment of religion in consummate religion, Hegel saw religion as playing an important role in effecting this realization. I will turn now to his analysis of how rational religion is supposed to do this. Later I'll consider how he came to temper his optimistic notion that religion can assist worldly freedom, suggesting that even Hegel came to see that this account of rational religion may simply be too rational.

4. Rational Religion and Freedom

According to Hegel, since "[t]he Christian religion is . . . the religion of freedom,"⁶ it can show us that freedom is divine. Thus, religion can assist in our realizing this freedom by further revealing that individual self-fulfillment involves us with others. Religion does this by disclosing that, as participants in the divine, we are part of something beyond our individual selves, a universal religious community of spirit. Believing that the divine has become human through Christ, the Christian community can enable individuals to grasp the objective, concrete universality of our shared humanity as embodying divine presence in the world.⁷ "The community has the peculiarity of containing within itself the infinite antithesis between absolute spirit . . . and subjective single spirit. . . . This antithesis is reconciled in and for itself, and the reconciliation is portrayed in religion."⁸

Second, beyond actualizing divinity in the intersubjective recognition and forgiveness of the religious community, religion may also help individuals to appreciate that their participation in and identification with the political and the state is a *further*, differentiated manifestation of this religious truth, since "[t]here is *one* concept of freedom in [both] religion and the state."⁹ In its own way, Christianity anticipates and prepares us for secular freedom.¹⁰ Religion can help us see that when religion and the sociopolitical are rationally constituted they are in harmony with and serve one another, for "[s]tates and laws are nothing other than religion as it appears in the relations of actuality."¹¹ Since religion brings awareness

that the divine and the secular *both* embody freedom, and since religious conviction involves freely bringing the particular subjective will in line with objectivity, these core teachings provide the grounds for individuals to also freely acknowledge the state and obey its laws.¹²

Insofar as religion cultivates and disposes us to identify with the state as the non-religious instantiation of a divinely ordained freedom, it *should* play a significant role in forming shared secular and political values and ends of freedom even beyond its own sphere, furthering civic unity and mutual understanding. Religion *should* be significant in overcoming cultural and political alienation and divisiveness. But to do this, religion must attain the rational self-understanding found in consummate religion. What else does this involve?

According to Hegel, religion's affirmation of freedom as divine engenders the religiously originated demand that freedom be actualized *beyond* religion. Thus true religion provides the ground for moving beyond itself, and this self-transcendence is part of its own truth. "[T]he spirit, now conscious of its freedom and certain that the objective process is [part of] the divine essence itself, duly comes to grips with this process and follows it through in the further development of secularity."¹³

But this movement requires religion to circumscribe itself and acknowledge its own limitations. The full realization of what it proclaims lies beyond it, in the secular and political domains of the modern world. Religion is like art, its consummation requires an *Aufhebung* involving its acceptance of a secondary and subordinate role. What does this subordination amount to and how does it shape religion's role in those domains?

5. Religion and the World

Hegel's claim that the political is religion fulfilled might sound close to contemporary fundamentalist theocratic views, but this is not the case. For one thing, "[i]t is admittedly accepted as a basic article of wisdom that the laws and the constitution of the state should be kept quite separate from religion."¹⁴ For Hegel, fulfilling the divine will does not ordain the domination of the world by religious outlooks, sensibilities, or doctrines.¹⁵ It calls instead for the transformation and externalization of religion. In having its truth fully actualized outside of itself, religion *qua* religion is itself changed, just as it steps back from this worldly

actualization. The secular does not become religious; religion is inscribed in and circumscribed by the secular. How?

Hand in hand with the separation of religion and the state, Hegel also insists that the state be generally acknowledged as the higher and final authority. As and insofar as the state is rational and thus embodies rational religion in the secular, religion is called upon to respect that sphere; only to a lesser and qualified extent must the state respect religion's autonomy.¹⁶ So while religion may express various "views concerning laws, constitution, and government . . . there must be a disposition to regard all these opinions as subordinate to the substantial interest of the state, and to abandon them in its favour; there must also be a disposition [to believe] that nothing is higher and more sacred than the disposition of the state itself."¹⁷ Yet, even the refusal to endorse civil supremacy must be permitted. The state's recognition of the subjective freedom of conscience and belief must even allow that religion may be regarded as "higher and more sacred" than the state. Still, that freedom is qualified, for religion must "contain nothing distinct from or opposed to the constitution."¹⁸ So while I may inwardly deny the state's superiority to religion, as a matter of personal subjective conviction, I must nonetheless outwardly conform in public behavior.

It's important to note that these restrictions are justified *epistemically* by the limited nature of religious truth. There are various qualifications and ramifications which follow from this lesser status. For one, when religion enters the public arena, it needs to be treated just like any other opinion: expression is allowed, within certain limits, but religion cannot challenge civil authority, and its active engagement in politics must be carefully overseen. As with other opinions, the proper approach for the state is "complete indifference," as long as opinion does not claim objective authority. But when opinion does so and "undermines actuality, the state must protect objective truth and the principles of ethical life."¹⁹ When may the state intervene? According to Hegel, it's in part an issue of whether what is under consideration is a particular or a universal matter. "[D]octrines peculiar to the Church as a religious community" are particular and—in principle—they "remain outside the domain of the state." But when the church puts forth "doctrines" which "relate to *objective principles*, to ethical and rational thoughts, its *expression* of these doctrines immediately brings it into the province of the state."²⁰ Furthermore, the important distinction between what is a matter of opinion and what is a

fundamental rational truth cannot itself be left to opinion, where feeling and emotion can easily be swayed. "[T]he state retains the right and form of self-conscious, objective rationality, the right to enforce the latter and to defend it against assertions based on the *subjective* variety [*Gestalt*] of truth, no matter what *assurances* and *authority* this truth may carry with it."²¹ For example, one might think that a church, claiming to be the authoritative voice of divine law, may refuse to perform gay marriages as a particular matter of religious dogma. But this is not clear. Since religion and the state are both domains of spirit, since the state expects confirmation by and support from religion, and since the state needs citizens who have been properly cultivated by religion, even internal matters of doctrine may be of legitimate state concern.²² Yet Hegel's position here allows for different applications according to varying empirical circumstances which are not themselves conceptually derivable. For he also holds that, if the state is "strong" it "may completely overlook individual matters [*Einzelheiten*] which might effect it."²³ In any case, underlying his rejection of complete freedom for religious expression is Hegel's explicit dismissal of the liberal view where the state is indifferent to the inner domain of subjectivity, according it unlimited freedom since the liberal state serves only the purely mechanical or instrumental function of externally enabling the satisfaction of internal subjective choices. In contrast, having rejected the liberal myth that subjects are atoms existing prior to and apart from society, the rational state recognizes that individuals are intersubjectively constituted and makes this fully possible. Thus, the state *has* a legitimate interest in the inner domain of subjectivity, since its enabling of individual freedom cannot occur unless citizens are inwardly disposed to freely identify with and support it.²⁴ A further consequence of this should be noted. All political and social orders are inextricably involved in the formation of subjects and the constitution of the conditions for their self-determination. But liberal theorists obdurately refuse to properly acknowledge this, regarding the state as a necessary evil and the paramount threat to freedom. Since they also identify freedom with property and consumer choice, they help to legitimate and secure the manipulation, subjugation, and domination of individuals by economic managerial power, all in the name of "liberty."

In sum, true religion is of significant importance for the sociopolitical world as it is needed to endorse the state and develop the disposition to obey it. As thus instrumentalized, religion's domain of authority

is restricted to spiritual inwardness, and even its pronouncements there are at least subject to state scrutiny. Its role in politics is restricted to activities that are indirect, preparatory, educative, and broadly supportive of the state. Certainly religion may not seriously threaten the state's final authority over the public sphere. Any religious intervention in the domain of politics and the secular must conform to and must finally be constrained by the dictates of rational freedom.

To consider an example, as a defender of the universality of freedom, Hegel would have approved of the active involvement of churches in the civil rights movement, on the one hand, while disapproving of those churches that defended segregation on the other. (Whether he would insist that the activities of the latter be curtailed is unclear.) So Hegel's view of the exercise of religious freedom in politics is not neutral to the specific goals of the activity. More broadly, Hegel's position is that not all views are objectively true; some can endanger objective freedom and should be monitored and possibly constrained, albeit with caution and restraint. His position is consistent with his concerns about democracy and in line with the notion that fundamental constitutional rights pertaining to equality and freedom are *not* a matter of majority opinion, and should not be permitted to be so, a view well supported by any number of historical and contemporary instances of majorities willing to deny minority rights, often on religious grounds.² The Problem with Religion It should be stressed that the problem with religion which demands its being constrained in the political is this. If it has not been philosophically reformed, such that it accepts the authority of reason, religion articulates and affirms truth in an unavoidably subjective fashion and tends to be blind to the limitations of this. Its claims are grounded in appeals to faith and authority, not reason; and these claims, precisely as religious and not philosophical, are ultimately justified by feelings and emotions.²⁶ Religion is not itself equipped to comprehend properly the distinction between the subjective and the objective.

But if religion is in some respects like other opinions, because of its subjective apprehension of the truth, why does religion present a special concern? Hegel worries that religion, more so than other opinions, will not be content remaining within the bounds of subjective knowing, as "an inward disposition and viewpoint" but will assert itself as "if it were the essentially valid and determining factor" in the "[political] context" and that this may "expose the state . . . to instability, insecurity, and disrup-

tion.”²⁷ It could even “lead to religious *fanaticism*, which, like political fanaticism, repudiates all political institutions and legal order as restrictive limitations on the inner emotions and as incommensurate with the infinity of these,” such that “decisions” about “actual existence” are made on the basis of “*the caprice of the arbitrary will*.”²⁸

It seems to me that the *Phenomenology*’s sweeping critique of subjectivity as authoritative provides the ultimate justification for these concerns. According to Hegel the “content of religion is absolute truth.”²⁹ Indeed, were it not, it would not be part of absolute spirit, nor could it have a rational core. But also, because it is religion, and *not* philosophy, this truth is inadequately expressed: “Religion is the relation to the absolute *in the form of feeling, representational thought and faith*.”³⁰ And this is true even of rational religion. Furthermore, as long as it persists at the level of subjective thought—as long as it remains religion and is not rationally transformed and philosophically sublated—religion specifically asserts its superiority to all other viewpoints. Indeed, religion unreformed “contains the requirement that everything else should be seen in relation” to it and that everything else “should receive confirmation, justification, and the assurance of certainty” from it.³¹

This is the crux of the problem. As the *Phenomenology* showed, these two—a claim to authority about the absolute, made from the standpoint of subjective, representational thought—are irremediably incompatible. The special danger of religion consists in its persistent predilection to take upon itself the ultimately untenable claim of affording final access to absolute truth. For, as we saw from the path of despair traversed in the *Phenomenology*, truth within consciousness’s finite, subjective framework is problematic precisely insofar as it claims such authority. Consciousness can only be finally certain of what is for itself. Thus, the claim that being-in-itself, possessing universal objectivity, *is* what is for-me can only mean either that some arbitrarily given content from the domain of subjective inwardness is being affirmed as *the* truth, or, ultimately, that sheer unconstrained subjectivity itself—the capacity to insist that “what is for me *is* true”—is raised to the final truth.

Two points. First, since it shows that and why no representational truth can ever be final and unconditioned, the *Phenomenology* reveals what underlies the perpetual problem of the continual multiplication of contending claims to be *the* true religion, the sole path to God. Incapable of attaining absolute truth, yet lacking insight into this condition afforded by the *Phenomenology*’s culmination in its decentering of subjective knowing,

religious subjectivity presents a seemingly never-ending string of doomed candidates for divine truth, each asserting against all others its exclusive right to the atomistic freedom of subjective conviction. Failing internal rationalization or control by a rational state, religions are likely to continue to foment divisiveness, discord, and disorder in the name of divine truth, demanding subjugation of infidels and heretics. Hegel's endorsement of the splitting of faith into multiple atoms as a protection against religion's illicit enforcement of subjective truth in the objective order is an important affirmation of his phenomenological insights.³² Since he also held that the state is founded on religion and advocated a unifying, reconciling rational religion, one *would* expect that he would endorse a state religion. The fact that he doesn't is one reflection of his own unease about the prospects for religion actually becoming post-phenomenological and rational. This philosophical concern may be reinforced for us by the fact that we live in a society where atomistic subjectivity prevails, a society which repeatedly reaffirms, ceaselessly promotes, and relentlessly commodifies liberal theory's elevation of the private, subjective self to the status of a mini-divinity.³³ This is regrettably echoed in much Anglophone philosophy which refuses to consider seriously moving beyond negative liberty and Kant to adequately acknowledge that individuality is socially constituted. This factual and theoretical state of affairs discourages hope for unity and reconciliation. When we further consider how atomistic subjectivity and self-satisfaction can be manipulated by powerful commercial interests promoting free market ideologies, there may be more reasons to see the hope of overcoming subjectivity as utopian. To cite a recent instance, consider Glenn Beck's "return to honor rally" promoting the religious foundations of the state, an endeavor supported by the Tea Party, an ostensibly libertarian, populist movement actually funded by neoliberal corporate billionaires enlisting the masses to eliminate government restrictions on the market.³⁴ The confluence of patriotic religiosity and capital is fearful to behold, but predictable, as both religion and the market are rooted in and depend upon the manipulation and satisfaction of subjective feelings and desires.

Second, the problem of religion making final claims about the absolute is *not* resolved if religion adopts an Enlightenment or postmodernist stance toward the truth. In the former instance a Kantian claim is made that we can have no knowledge of what is absolute. In the latter, it is more radically asserted that there is no objective knowledge of anything. Postmodernists thus reflect the Pietists of Hegel's own time for whom

everything rested on faith.³⁵ In both these cases, finitude is affirmed and made final and absolute, and some version of faith is installed as the way to the ultimate, or, as with Kierkegaard, is elevated to the ultimate. Since both Enlightenment Kantians and postmodernists deny a place for reason in the domain of the absolute, all that's left to fill the vacuum of religious belief determination is subjective certainty as the determiner of what God commands. As Hegel describes this, when religion is in this subjective mode, "[w]hat it produces or manifests by itself is that this infinite inwardness, or pure thinking within itself, turns against authority and demands the form of selfhood with regard to every content that is to be accepted by it as true."³⁶ When "[t]hose who 'seek the Lord'" refuse to raise "subjectivity to the cognition of truth and knowledge of objectivity" they "can produce nothing but folly, outrage, and the destruction of all ethical relations."³⁷

7. The World beyond Reason

Despite his optimism about rational religion, it seems that the *Phenomenology's* insights concerning the incompatibility of religion's mode of knowing with its claim to the absolute were borne out for Hegel in his later assessments of the state of religion in his time. Rather than living up to his rational model, he found it infected with the stubborn Enlightenment subjectivism pervading society at large. He diagnoses the larger problem in the *Philosophy of History*: "Not content with the fact that rational rights and freedom of person and property are recognized, that there is an organized state encompassing spheres of civil life which have their own functions to perform . . . *liberalism*, counters all this with the atomistic principle of individual wills, according to which everything should be governed by the latter's express power and with their express consent."³⁸

This atomism precludes the acceptance of and identification with the objective rational state. Since, from the liberal point of view, governments are only the collective expression of the happenstance concatenation of particular wills, they are not recognized as having any legitimate objectivity or genuine legitimacy in their own right. Anticipating the Tea Party movement, he wrote: "Particular rulings of the government are at once opposed by [appeals to] freedom, on the grounds that they are [expressions of] a particular will and consequently arbitrary. The will of the many overthrows the administration, and the erstwhile opposition

now takes office; but inasmuch as this opposition is now the government, it is in turn opposed by the many." As it is not clear that there is any way out of this loop, the dialectic of enlightenment proceeds without closure: "So the movement and unrest continue. This collision, this crux, this problem is what history now faces, and it must solve it at some time in the future." He finds that, as in Roman times "the quest for private welfare and enjoyment [is] the order of the day; moral insight [the basis] of personal actions, opinions and convictions, [is] without objective truth and the truth is the opposite. I acknowledge only what I believe subjectively."³⁹

He finds this state of affairs in philosophy and religion as well: In "our time" "philosophical science" has been "degraded" and "by declaring the cognition of truth to be a futile endeavor, this self-styled philosophizing has reduced all thought and topics *to the same level*. . . . As a result the concepts of truth and the laws of ethics are reduced to mere opinions and subjective convictions . . . and in the same way, all objects, however barren and particular [*partikular*], and all materials however arid, are accorded the same status as what constitutes the interest of all thinking people and the bonds of the ethical world."⁴⁰

"[For some time] the teaching of the philosophers has corresponded [to this view] we know and cognize nothing of God." And now "the universal unity based on religion" and a "universal political life" are not to be found.⁴¹ "[T]heological teachers" have reverted to "reflection, and have found their satisfaction in finitude, subjectivity, and precisely thereby in vanity."⁴² Religious doctrines have become "representations, mere factual data" and "thinking as a reflective activity . . . causes the secure to waver, dissolves everything dialectically, and leads [thinking] back to the subjective . . . which it makes the foundation."⁴³ "[M]oralistic views" and "subjective feelings" have been put in the place of "speculative truth" and thus "when [we are left] inwardly empty of objective truth . . . [then] one thing alone [remains] certain: finitude [turned] in upon itself, arrogant barrenness and lack of content, the extremity of self-satisfied dis-enlightenment."⁴⁴

Hegel cannot discern a practical solution. Where a younger Hegel thought philosophy needed to catch up to the times, philosophy may now be in advance of them and out of sorts with the spirit of the age. "Once the time has come when what is demanded is justification by the concept, then the unity of the internal and the external no longer exists in immediate consciousness, in actuality, and nothing is justified by faith. . . . the process of decay has gone too deep for that."⁴⁵ In this

condition "the common people" for whom "the truth can exist only in the form of representation, are helpless vis-à-vis the pressure of their interior impulses."⁴⁶ And while philosophy has "show[n] forth the rational content of religion. . . . This conceptual cognition of religion is by nature not universal" and is finally found only in the "community of philosophy," which takes over the stewardship of spirit from religion.⁴⁷ Given the abandonment of the truth of religion by prevailing practice, and the existing contradiction between reason and religion, reconciliation, now attainable in theory, is left to the philosophical community. "Religion must take refuge in philosophy. . . . But philosophy [is also] partial . . . an isolated order of priests—a sanctuary—[who are] untroubled about how it goes with the world, [who need] not mix with it, [and whose work is to preserve] the possession of truth."⁴⁸ "How the empirical present day is to find its way out of its discord, and how things are to turn out for it, are questions that must be left up to it and are not the immediate practical business and affair of philosophy."⁴⁹ In the 1824 version of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel is again critical both of the "two opposing views" represented by "the church" and the Enlightenment, and again indicates that it is "the community of philosophy" where the crucial reconciliation of reason and religion will take place.⁵⁰ In the 1827 version his remarks about the role of philosophy are less gloomy and he reaffirms his earlier hope that reconciliation may be sought in the "ethical realm." Nonetheless, while affirming that religion has "true content," he insists that it "must stand the test of thought," which is to be found only in philosophy which has left behind "the form of faith as representation." He reiterates his phenomenologically based criticisms of both Pietism's "subjectivity" which "acknowledges no objective truth" and the Enlightenment's affliction with an "abstract subjectivity devoid of content." Only in philosophy "according to which the content takes refuge in the concept" are these difficulties overcome, whereas the subjective standpoints of Pietism and the Enlightenment "recognize no content and hence no truth." Philosophy "is alone capable of bearing witness to, and thus of expressing the witness of spirit in a developed, thoughtful fashion." The "vanity of the understanding" and "ingenuous religiosity" are opposed to philosophy and only philosophy affords the reconciliation which "is the peace of God, which does not 'surpass all reason,' but is rather the peace that *through* reason is first known and thought and is recognized as what is true." "Finite thinking" prevails in dogmatics and "the fundamental doctrines of Christianity have for the most part disap-

peared" from it, only to be "preserved" in philosophy.⁵¹

8. Conclusion

It seems to me that Hegel has provided both philosophical and factual grounds to question his hope that religion *can* be rationalized, heal secular divisiveness, and still remain religion. The basis of his hope was the belief that the conceptual and the preconceptual, thought and feeling, could somehow be brought to coincide *from the vantage of and while remaining within subjective religiosity*. But on Hegel's own terms, for religion to be religion, and not philosophy, it must remain at the level of the subjective, where truth is representational, not conceptual, and where it is grounded in feelings and emotions, and not in reason. Even if the concept and what it discloses about religion *are* implicit in Christianity, they cannot be accessed from it: one must already be beyond religion and *within* philosophy to see what religion is supposed to be.⁵² Religion cannot be rationalized without philosophy, and once rationalized, it bears at best a family resemblance to what both Hegel's notion of religion and the ordinary understanding of religion regard as distinctive about it, its representational grasp of the truth. As Hegel's *Phenomenology* and his examination of the religion of his time confirm, where God is regarded as a given transcendent other, the arbitrary will ultimately determines the nature of this divine object. This is a position as incoherent and dangerous as the ostensibly post-religious approach which, following Heidegger and his legion of epigones, fetishizes an unknowable Other as that before which we must kneel. Consequently, Hegel's turn from religion to philosophy as the ground of reconciliation is securely based in his thought, although it seems to require resignation about philosophy's current impotence in the world. On the factual side, his skepticism about reason's effective presence in his world raises questions about the intelligibility of consummate religion as the completion of the development of religion, and also about whether modernity as presently constituted *can* overcome Enlightenment subjectivity and the fragmentation inherent in it. The prospects for attaining a rational, reconciling religion which could unify as a civic religion seem fatally compromised both by the inherently subjective mode of religious truth and the larger prevailing social orthodoxy of subjectivist freedom.

This state of affairs confirms the perspicacity of Hegel's phenom-

enological critique of subjectivity and his call for restrictions on religion's propensity to assert its authority in the public square. While it is *philosophically* rational to expect religion to deny its privileged access to the absolute and to accept the superiority of the secular and of philosophy, it does not seem to be practically reasonable to expect religions to do so. Just consider what rational religion demands of believers. They must accept that the language of their sacred texts is merely metaphorical, that its efficacy is emotive and subject to the irrationality, mutability, and manipulability of the emotions. They must accept that their sacred texts are stories, parables; like poetry and fairy tales, they are images without literal truth and do not represent what is; consequently, they must acknowledge that their belief that God is a real transcendent being is incoherent and that their faith can only amount to the blasphemous assertion of the divinity of the subjective will. But that is not all. They must also accept that religion has been superseded by philosophy, that the "divine" is attainable *here*, in the community and the secular ethical world, and not out there, in the beyond. And all this requires grasping that the determination of objective truth is immanent to the process of reason's autonomous self-determination as it works to unfold in the transformation of the world.

If the positive side of Hegel's account of rational religion in modernity seems unlikely to be realized, how might this affect the prospects of accepting the restrictions on religion in the public arena which he advocated? Two scenarios seem possible. One might expect that the uncertainty of faith *should* lead to humility, religious tolerance, and pluralism, and even to the very sorts of restrictions on religion that Hegel demands. But nothing within the religious outlook as such, uniformed by philosophy, can demonstrate that the grounds for tolerance and pluralism follow from the emptiness and willful arbitrariness of subjective faith taken on faith and uniformed by reason; if tolerance exists within religions, its presence comes from what feeling and the heart *may* just happen to affirm from among the array of subjectivity's given contents. Since objective *uncertainty* demands that faith alone decides, the necessity of the strength of subjective conviction—of the power of the will to affirm—will more likely lead to arrogance and intolerance masking itself as pious humility heeding divine commands from the transcendent divinity. Consider the Reverend Terry Jones's insistence that he, like Abraham with Isaac, is just following God's command to burn something.

Alternatively, if religious subjectivism is no guarantee of tolerance, among other things, it doesn't necessarily preclude it either. Accepting rational restrictions on religion doesn't necessarily require understanding Hegel's philosophy. It seems possible both to accept these limits, to advocate tolerance, mutual understanding, and reconciliation, *and* to take a traditional subjectivist view of religion and its truth. This is possible since, at the level of subjective understanding it's possible to hold any number of incompatible views. There's nothing in religious texts or religious consciousness itself which can reconcile the unresolved contradictions which abound in religion. By itself religious thought cannot show that "love thy neighbor" should prevail over "smite thine enemy," or that "jihad" in the Koran properly refers to an individual's effort to do what is right as opposed to making war against unbelievers. As Robert Wright put it, echoing Hegel on religious subjectivism: "After all, the adherents of a given religion . . . focus on things that confirm their attitudes and ignore things that don't. And they carry that tunnel vision into their own scripture; if there's hatred in their hearts, they fasten onto the hateful parts of scripture, but if there's not, they won't."⁵³ Perhaps the fact that some religiously minded folk favor the rational moments of their holy books, while ignoring the equal legitimacy, religiously speaking, of their irrational and pre-rational aspects, provides at least some basis for hope that *die sauerer Arbeit des Geistes* is slowly making headway. Perhaps we may once again without ironic distance read the lines from Wordsworth:

Oh pleasant exercise of hope and joy!

. . .

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,

. . .

When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights,

When most intent on making of herself

A prime Enchantress—to assist the work

Which then was going forward in her name!

Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,

The beauty wore of promise . . .⁵⁴

Notes

1. As I employ the terms here, “Enlightenment” refers to the specific historical period, while “enlightenment” denotes a more sweeping and comprehensive movement arising whenever and wherever philosophy, the demand to justify belief, is taken up. As its introduction makes clear, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* treats the Enlightenment within this larger project. Hegel’s philosophical endeavor showed that attaining the goals of enlightenment—truth and freedom—requires transcending the subjectivist framework which reached its apotheosis in the Enlightenment.

2. Maker, 1992, 67–85.

3. Maker, 1994.

4. Maker, 2007.

5. Hegel, *Rph* preface, 20–23.

6. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R 303. “Religion is knowledge of the highest truth, and this truth, defined more precisely, is *free spirit*.” “In religion, human beings are free before God” (Hegel, 1831, *The Relation of Religion to the State*, 226).

7. “In the Lutheran church, the subjectivity and certainty of the individual are just as necessary as the objectivity of truth . . . the subjective spirit becomes free in truth, negates its particularity, and comes to itself in truth. Thus Christian freedom is actualized” (Hegel, 1827–1831, 202).

8. Hegel, 1821–1827, 239.

9. Hegel, 1831, 226.

10. Hegel, 1827–1831, for religion has “unfurled” “the banner of the *free spirit*” which is “with itself in truth and truth alone” (202).

11. Hegel, 1827–1831, 202. See also Hegel, 1831, 226–227.

12. Hegel, 1827–1831, 204. Religion and the state “share the same root, and the laws receive their highest endorsement from religion” (217).

13. Hegel, 1827–1831, 202–203. “The state is the divine will as present spirit, *unfolding* as the actual shape and *organization of a world*” (*Rph* §270 R, 292).

14. Hegel, 1827–1831, 217.

15. While religion and the state “share the same root” (Hegel, 1827–1831, 217) and “religion constitutes the *foundation* which embodies the ethical realm in general . . . it is at the same time *only* a foundation; and this is where the two [i.e., the state and religion] diverge” (*Rph* §270 R, 292.) While they have an “essential unity” “in the truth of disposition and principles” “the *difference* between their forms of consciousness should attain *particular existence*” and “if the state is to attain existence as the *self-knowing* ethical actuality of spirit, its form must become distinct from that of authority and faith” (*Rph* §270 R, 301).

16. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 295–297.

17. Hegel, 1827–1831, 216.

18. Hegel, 1827–1831, 216–217.
19. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 301.
20. Hegel, *Rph* §270, R, 299, second emphasis added.
21. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 299.
22. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 297.
23. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 295.
24. Thus religion needs to serve this end and is consequently not completely free to oppose the state (Hegel, 1827–1831, 217; *Rph* §270 R, 295).
25. Consider the recent example of the dispute over building of the Cor-doba Cultural Center close to Ground Zero. According to the *New York Times* (August 22, 2010) 61 percent of those polled oppose. The *Greenville News* (September 2, 2010) reported that one-third of those polled claimed that Muslims had no right to build there.
26. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 299, A 303.
27. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 293.
28. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 293.
29. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 292.
30. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 293.
31. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 292.
32. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 302.
33. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 294.
34. Hegel, 1827–1831, 219. See Mayer, 2010, and Harvey, 2005, chap. 2, “The Construction of Consent.”
35. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, Nisbet 294.
36. Hegel, 1821–1827, 240.
37. Hegel, *Rph* §270 R, 294.
38. Hegel, 1827–1831, 219.
39. Hegel 1827–1831, 219; Hegel, 1821–1827, 159.
40. Hegel, *Rph* preface, 19.
41. Hegel, 1821–1827, 159.
42. Hegel, 1821–1827, 161.
43. Hegel, 1821–1827, 160.
44. Hegel, 1821–1827, 160.
45. Hegel, 1821–1827, 161, n. 256.
46. Hegel, 1821–1827, 161, n. 256.
47. Hegel, 1821–1827, 247.
48. Hegel, 1821–1827, 162.
49. Hegel, 1821–1827, 162, n. 259.
50. Hegel, 1821–1827, 246, 247.
51. Hegel, 1821–1827, 342, 274, 344, 345, 261–262, 347.
52. Hegel, *Rph* §270, 299.
53. Wright, 2010.

54. Wordsworth, 1936, "French Revolution as It Appeared to Enthusiasts at Its Commencement," 165–166.

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Hegel's Defense of Toleration

Timothy Brownlee

1. Toleration in the Liberal Tradition

One of the central aims of political liberalism is to secure for individuals the conditions necessary for the pursuit of their own reflectively determined religious and moral interests. Indeed, one prominent strand in the liberal tradition identifies protecting this capacity for individual self-determination in moral and religious matters as the most fundamental aim of liberal political schemes. Since guaranteeing this liberty, the liberty of conscience, entails a strong demand for toleration, it should therefore not surprise us that we find a common endorsement of the value of toleration among a diverse range of liberal thinkers.

Figures in the social contract tradition, in particular, have provided some of the strongest justifications for the value of toleration. These thinkers anchor their accounts of toleration in the need to protect moral and religious liberty, and they appeal to the contract idea to show that violations of that liberty would constitute a violation of right or justice. Locke argues that the demand for toleration is the complement to an individual liberty, established by "civil right," which allows individuals to pursue their religious and moral interests independent of coercion or

interference by the legislative authority. Since the power of the legislative authority should extend only to the protection of individual liberty, security, and property, the attempt to coerce individuals in matters relating to the “care of souls” would be both illegitimate and ineffective. In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls argues that the demand for toleration stems from the first principle of justice, which guarantees the most significant possible scheme of universal basic liberties, among which Rawls includes the liberty of conscience: “Toleration is not derived from practical necessity or reasons of state. Moral and religious freedom follows from the principle of equal liberty.”¹ Locke and Rawls anchor their accounts of toleration in a liberty possessed by individuals with which it would be inappropriate for the state to interfere. This common feature distinguishes their views from other defenses of toleration, like those which appeal to a necessary end which toleration is to promote like “peaceful coexistence” or to a skeptical hypothesis concerning the unknowability of the ultimate ends of human life. Rather, both argue that toleration is necessary because of the need to protect moral and religious freedom of individual agents from unjust interference.

We might be concerned that Hegel’s rejection of the social contract tradition also entails a denial of liberal values like toleration. It is, of course, well known that Hegel is a critic of that tradition, and of the atomistic conception of agency underlying it.² Many interpreters have understood Hegel’s criticisms of the contract idea to be the basis for a broader rejection of the values which predominate in the modern liberal tradition.³ However, it is important to note that Hegel’s criticisms of the social contract idea are *internal* criticisms. That is, Hegel does not criticize the values—freedom and a condition governed by a standard of right—which the contract idea is supposed to justify and protect. Rather, Hegel’s critique is based on the claim that the merely “formal notion of freedom” underlying the modern liberal conception of the human individual constitutes an “abstraction,” and cannot provide the basis for a political organization of any kind, much less one in which “rational right, and the freedoms of person and of property count.”⁴ Hegel’s criticism is therefore internal in the sense that he aims to show that the contract idea cannot in fact provide the justificatory foundation for the values which it is supposed to promote. This fact is important, since Hegel does not criticize the values which the contract tradition aims to justify, namely, rational right and individual freedom, but rather the “abstract”

and “formal” conception of human individuality and freedom underlying the contractarian procedure of justification. Hegel’s argument is that the contract idea is not helpful in founding a scheme of institutions governed by right, in which freedom is real or actual.

Part of my aim in what follows is to show that Hegel’s rejection of the social contract tradition does not entail a rejection of the central values which animate liberalism. In recent years, Martha Nussbaum has identified the need for a non-contractarian defense of liberal values. While Nussbaum’s critique of the contractarian tradition is different from Hegel’s, their responses to shortcomings in that tradition are importantly similar. That is, both argue that the contract idea needs to be replaced by a conception of the conditions under which we can realize those capacities which are essential to leading a properly human life—a life of dignity in Nussbaum’s case, and a life of freedom in Hegel’s.⁵ My particular aim here is to demonstrate that Hegel defends toleration on the grounds that it is necessary to protect the liberty of conscience, a freedom possessed by individuals from undue interference in moral and religious matters. While Hegel’s defense of toleration is primarily a defense of *religious* pluralism of a kind, we shall see that, like Locke, Hegel understands religion to be important because of its promotion of *moral* aims.⁶ I proceed as follows. After outlining the contours of Locke’s argument for toleration (§2), I provide a detailed account of the lengthy discussion of the relation between church and state in §270 R of the *Rechtsphilosophie* (§3). Since Hegel anchors his account of toleration there in the idea of subjective right, I explain the role that subjective right plays in the *Rechtsphilosophie* (§4), before considering its specific role in Hegel’s defense of toleration (§5). I argue that Hegel’s accommodationist defense of *tolerance*⁷ is, in an important sense, more robust than that of Locke, and bears significant similarity to Rawls’s account of the limits of toleration in *A Theory of Justice*. I conclude by suggesting that Hegel’s non-contractarian account of political right can nonetheless provide the materials for a defense of liberal values like toleration (§6).

2. Locke’s Defense of Toleration

Among the many accounts of toleration that we find in the early modern era, Locke’s is importantly innovative because of its appeal to the idea

of civil right. Others ground the demand for toleration in the need for “peaceful coexistence” among those with conflicting moral and religious views,⁸ or in a skeptical hypothesis concerning the unknowability of moral or religious truth,⁹ or in a natural right which is not abandoned with the entry into society.¹⁰ However, Locke contends that the social contract establishes a normative standard which we do not find in nature, namely, that of civil right, which includes the protection of the liberty to pursue one’s moral and religious interests.

The right on which Locke’s account of toleration rests is instituted through the establishment of the social contract. As Locke explains in the *Second Treatise* (1698), the foundation of civil society lies in the consent of every individual to surrender certain natural rights and instead accept the authority of an instituted legislative power, whose purpose is to establish laws protecting their “Lives, Liberties, and Estates.”¹¹ While this agreement institutes a legislative power, Locke argues in the 1689 *Letter Concerning Toleration* that it also fixes the *limits* of legislative power, which can be legitimately and effectively exercised only with regard to outward concerns, “life, liberty, health, and indolency of body; and the possession of certain outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture and the like.”¹² In the absence of a law justifying the exercise of political power, individuals enjoy an extensive range of freedoms, which Locke identifies as the “Liberty to follow my own Will in all things, where the Rule prescribes not.”¹³

For Locke, the demand for toleration follows simply from recognizing the limits of this instituted legislative authority.¹⁴ While political power is only legitimately and effectively exercised in the regulation and control of “outward” things (namely, the protection of property), the concerns of religion are, for Locke, fundamentally “inward”: “The care of souls cannot belong to the civil magistrate, because his power only consists in outward force: but true and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God.”¹⁵ That is, because of the limits to the authority of the magistrate instituted by the standard of civil right, “The care . . . of every man’s soul belongs unto himself, and is to be left unto himself.”¹⁶ Toleration, for Locke, is simply the duty to recognize that the “care of the soul” of each individual belongs to that individual alone, and cannot be the object of state coercion.

Acknowledging this duty also entails the acknowledgment of specific duties which the state has toward churches. Since churches are

simply voluntary societies into which individuals enter for the sake of the salvation of their souls, the state is obliged to treat them no differently than it does other voluntary organizations. On the one hand, the state is obliged to guarantee the “civil concerns” to which its individuals are entitled, and it is required to enforce laws protecting the liberty and property of churches as well.¹⁷ On the other hand, the state’s authority is *limited* with regard to churches only to these outward matters, and the legislative authority would overstep the bounds of its legitimacy in trying to influence matters of religious doctrine and teaching, whose proper place is the inward domain of the conscience of its members. As voluntary civil society organizations, churches are nonetheless, like individuals, required to obey the laws of the state. As long as the laws do not discriminate between different creeds by attempting to exert an undue influence on the conscience of the individual, they must be applied equally and commonly to all. Conscientious objection and refusal, even on religious grounds, are therefore no different from other violations of law.¹⁸ In short, Locke is not an “accommodationist,”¹⁹ and he instead insists on the uniform application of the law to every case, whether the root of non-compliance is religious or not.

3. Church and State in the *Rechtsphilosophie*

Of the writings published in Hegel’s lifetime, we find the only sustained discussion of toleration in a lengthy remark appended to §270 of the 1821 *Rechtsphilosophie*.²⁰ In §270 itself, Hegel argues that the universal interests that the state promotes have their “substance” in “the maintenance of the particular interests” of its constituents, and the remark generally concerns “the relation between the state and religion.”²¹ While the connection between these two issues may not be immediately evident, Hegel eventually makes it clear that *churches* provide the practical mediator between the state and religion, and his main concern is to show that the *universal* purposes of the state are better sustained when they need not contend with a single monumental church, but rather stand over a diverse range of “*particular churches*.”²² This point is itself significant since it indicates that Hegel believes that some form of religious diversity is itself *good* for the state. Indeed, Hegel suggests that the primary difference between religion and the state is a formal one, not one of content or aim. Both share “the spirit” as their content, and both are concerned

with the promotion of freedom. Hegel stresses that religion's role is a foundational one (it constitutes the *Grundlage* of freedom) for the state, while the state is freedom realized in an organized objective world of institutions.²³ Toleration is significant in Hegel's treatment of the role that churches play as objective, institutional mediators between religion and the state.

Hegel identifies "church communities" (*Kirchengemeinde*) as civil society organizations requiring possessions and property for their work. They therefore fall under the police supervision of the state.²⁴ These communities are constituted by "dedicated individuals" through whose "service," specific action (*Handlung*) and teaching (*Lehre*) are undertaken. Hegel stresses that such communities are so important because of the *moral* aims that they promote. That is, churches derive their moral significance from the fact that religion plays an irreducible role in shaping and forming the individual's "disposition" (*Gesinnung*).²⁵ Specifically, religion, whose object is "the absolute," provides the individual with a confidence of the non-relative *truth* of her practical convictions, which the domain of objective spirit cannot provide.²⁶ Hegel therefore shares Locke's view that churches derive their importance primarily from the important role that they play in moral development or in what Locke called the "care of the soul."

It is because of the important moral role that churches play that Hegel stresses the need for their appropriate treatment by the state. Again, like Locke, Hegel argues that churches should be afforded the same protections as other civil society organizations. As civil society organizations, churches must acknowledge and confirm legitimate exercises of the state's authority. In return, the state fulfills its duty in "providing encouragement" (*Vorschub zu tun*) and "granting protection" (*Schutz zu wahren*) to church communities in their legitimate expression (*Äußerung*) through both action and teaching. The state grants the same legal protections to the property and actions of churches as it does to other citizens and organizations.²⁷ Moreover, because of the significant role that religion plays in the individual's moral life, the state even fulfills a duty to church communities in requiring that its citizens join a church. Of course, Hegel stresses throughout that the state must refrain from interference in matters of church teaching and action, whose source is the individual's *conscience* (*Gewissen*).²⁸ Insofar as the *content* of religious teaching and action remains the inward domain of conscience, the state ought not to get

involved in or interfere with (*einlassen*) internal church affairs. As for the outward expression of religious conviction through teaching and action, Hegel stresses that these should, in general, be held to the same legal standards that regulate speech and practice in the state generally. While the requirement that individuals join a church might seem extreme, the restrictions that Hegel identifies on the state's interference in church practice should temper that appearance of extremity. In particular, if the state can have no say in the *content* of church teaching and action, it is far from clear that it can demand that individual "churches" promote specific religious aims. Rather, Hegel's text suggests only that the state might require individuals to join some recognized civil society organization whose primary aim is the individual's moral development.

The demand that individuals join some "church," and the demand that the state refrain from interfering in church doctrine both stem from the same principle, namely, "the right of the subjective freedom of self-consciousness."²⁹ On the one hand, Hegel stresses that the state is obliged to refrain from interference in church doctrine and teaching since the locus of these is the individual's *conscience*, which, he claims elsewhere, is "a sanctuary which it would be a sacrilege to violate."³⁰ On the other hand, churches are so important precisely because of the role that they play in the development of the individual's moral disposition, a development which is impossible without the direct engagement of the individual's own subjectivity and conscience.³¹ Understanding Hegel's arguments for toleration therefore requires that we clarify the meaning of subjective right.

4. Subjective Right

In his mature political philosophy, Hegel assigns a specific systematic role to the idea of right. In general, "right" is the organizing idea of the *Rechtsphilosophie*, which occupies the central part of his mature philosophy of spirit, concerning "objective spirit." Specifically, right provides a normative standard against which the *justice* of institutions can be measured.³² The content of this normative standard is derived from consideration of the objective conditions necessary for the realization of *freedom*, or necessary for self-determination. It is for this reason that Hegel identifies right as "*the existence [Dasein] of the free will.*"³³ We can clearly see both of these elements in Hegel's account of property. The institution of property

is protected as a matter of right because property is necessary for the actualization of freedom.³⁴ Likewise, the set of institutions which Hegel outlines in the “Ethical life” chapter of the *Rechtsphilosophie* counts as just at least in part because, through laws and legal institutions, it protects private property, and punishes incursions against it.³⁵

While *right* serves as the organizing idea of the philosophy of objective spirit, Hegel does not hesitate to speak equally of *rights* which belong to individuals.³⁶ Since right simply is the objective realization of freedom, configurations of the will which constitute such a realization are themselves rights. While idiosyncratic in some ways,³⁷ Hegel’s discussions of rights are clearly recognizable from the standpoint of contemporary rights discourses. That is, rights belong to individual wills, and something counts as a right for an individual if it is necessary to secure the conditions for that individual’s freedom. Some rights are “universal,” in the sense that they take no account of the individual’s “particularity.” These rights, which Hegel calls “abstract rights,” stipulate what an agent is either permitted (*Erlaubnis*) or has the authority (*Befugnis*) to do.³⁸ Most notably, these rights protect property and contracts by stipulating prohibitions (*Rechtsverbote*) against the violations of others’ rights. Abstract rights therefore stipulate those entitlements which belong to individuals which others are prohibited from violating.

By contrast, those rights which Hegel identifies as “subjective rights” take specific account of the individual’s “particularity.”³⁹ In contrast to personhood, Hegel identifies subjectivity as the “reflected” moment of the will. Subjective rights take into consideration the “determining grounds” of the agent’s will, especially insofar as the agent’s insight and aim, and “particular interest” contribute to the realization of the subject’s freedom.⁴⁰ In contrast to the simple permissions and entitlements which arise from abstract right, subjective rights are rather grounded on what is required of the agent, what she *ought* to do, or her obligations (*Verpflichtungen*) and duties (*Pflichten*).⁴¹ Even though subjectivity shifts the focus to what an agent *ought* to do (rather than what she is permitted or entitled to do), Hegel claims that it is no less a right. Most importantly, Hegel stresses that “The *right of the subjective will* is that that which the subject ought to recognize as good be *seen* [*eingesehen*] by the subject *as good*.”⁴² This right therefore protects subjects against the demand that they act contrary to their knowledge of the good.

It is in this sense that the right of the subjective will can be seen to constitute the foundation for protections of individual conscience. Hegel

understands conscience to be that element of our constitution as agents which seeks practical justifications, reasons for action,⁴³ and, as we have seen, the right of the subjective will stipulates the demand for precisely such reasons. It is true that Hegel is famously critical of a specific conception of conscience, according to which an action counts as good exclusively because I believe it to be good.⁴⁴ Rather, Hegel stresses the need for claims about the good to be justified not simply by individual certainty, but rather by appeal to "laws and principles."⁴⁵ However, this does not amount to a complete repudiation of the claims of conscience. On Hegel's view, conscientious protection is demanded as a matter of right precisely because I must be *able* to affirm those considerations that constitute my reasons for action as justified in order for my act to be truly self-determined and free. Conscientious affirmability is not alone sufficient to lend my action ethical value; however, it is necessary for me to be able to *recognize* my actions as, in fact, good, since that recognition is indispensable for my autonomy and freedom.⁴⁶

5. The Justification and Limits of Toleration

Subjective right provides the foundation for Hegel's defense of toleration in two senses. First, it is because the state would violate the subjective rights of its citizens in interfering with the content of church doctrine that Hegel argues that the state cannot enforce religious uniformity. Rather, religious diversity is protected by the demand that individual citizens be able to recognize as good the practical commitments which Hegel believes are foundational in church practice. While Hegel also suggests that this diversity will be good for the state for the reasons that we saw at the start of section 3, his argument for the necessity of religious diversity is ultimately grounded in the demands of right. On this basis alone, we can identify several significant similarities between the defenses of state non-interference offered by Locke and Hegel. First, both understand the individual's conscience to consist in a kind of "inwardness" distinct from the outward matters over which the state has legitimate and effective power, and they both argue that conscience should be protected from incursions by the state by appealing to a determinate conception of right—civil right in Locke's account, subjective right in Hegel's. Second, both Locke and Hegel justify state toleration in religious matters by appealing to the *moral* ends which religion promotes—the "care of the

soul” in Locke’s case, the development of the individual’s “disposition” in Hegel’s—and they ascribe a unique significance to our capacity for moral self-determination in their accounts of liberty and freedom.

However, subjective right also plays an importantly unique role in Hegel’s defense of toleration. That is, in addition to the demand for religious diversity, Hegel also identifies a need for the state to tolerate individuals who, for religious reasons, refrain from executing direct duties which they owe to the state. Citing as exemplary groups like Quakers and Anabaptists who refuse, for religious reasons, to recognize certain political obligations, like those entailed by conscription, Hegel argues that the state ought, in general, to *tolerate* “sects” like these: “The state that is well formed [*ausgebildete*] in its organization and thereby strong [*starke*] can conduct itself liberally in overseeing the individuals that affect it, and can endure [*aushalten*] communities . . . which do not recognize direct duties against the state on religious grounds.”⁴⁷ It is true that Hegel does think that groups like Quakers and Anabaptists will contribute indirectly to the maintenance of the state by their participation in civil society, and that such groups cannot make the same kinds of claims on the state as do other citizens who do execute all of their duties. However, he never claims that the state should *not* recognize them as bearers of rights, or that they should *not* possess political rights. Rather, Hegel stresses that this state action is tolerance (*Toleranz*) “in its proper sense” (*im eigentlichen Sinne*) precisely because the state only *tolerates* or *endures* diverse churches in cases where their members refuse to recognize a direct duty to the state on conscientious grounds.⁴⁸ Otherwise, as we have seen, matters of conscience and religious diversity generally are protected and guaranteed against state interference by subjective right.

In identifying that individuals who refrain from recognizing direct duties to the state on religious grounds should be “tolerated,” Hegel diverges from Locke. As we have seen in section 2, Locke argues against any special protection for those who fail to obey legitimate laws for reasons of conscience. By contrast, in addition to claiming that the laws of the state should protect individual churches without interfering in matters of conscience (as Locke too does), Hegel *also* argues that the state, if it is strong and well formed, should tolerate individuals who disobey the laws on conscientious grounds. That is, because he believes that subjective right entails a demand that the state recognize as legitimate instances of conscientious refusal, Hegel is an accommodationist, while Locke is not.

It may seem that this difference in their conceptions of the limits of toleration stems from Locke's and Hegel's differing conception of the political role of the religion. That is, Locke understands religion to be a merely "private" matter, in distinction from the "public good" which the state's laws are to promote, and which takes precedence over those private concerns.⁴⁹ Moreover, since the existence of churches presupposes that of civil institutions which guarantee churches' property and security, the demands of the state are prior to and more fundamental than those of religion. By contrast, we have seen that Hegel contends that religion constitutes the "foundation" of the state. However, Hegel also contends that only certain "free" religions are compatible with the norms and standards which govern the state. Hence, even though Hegel ascribes a fundamental role to religion in the state, this fact alone cannot explain why Hegel would extend the demand for tolerance to include churches whose demands may in some cases conflict with those of the state. This difference between Locke and Hegel is instead ultimately rooted in the specific idea of subjective right which Hegel defends. For Locke, liberty of conscience is secured only as a result of the *limitation* of the justified authority of the state, and, in cases of conflict, that justified authority takes precedence over the demands of individual conscience. By contrast, for Hegel, the state has *not only* an obligation to refrain from interference in matters of conscience. Instead, the realization of subjective right is just as essential in leading a free life as is the protection of the "abstract" rights which guarantee property. Since the authority of the state derives from the contribution that it makes to securing the conditions for a free life through the realization of abstract *and* subjective right, in addition to the negative obligation of non-interference, the state also has a positive obligation to secure and protect the conditions for conscientious reflection and activity.⁵⁰

To be sure, the state's capacity for tolerance will be limited by its "strength." However, it is important to note that, for Hegel, the "strength" of the state does not simply depend on the coercive force that it can marshal to back up the demands of the laws. Rather, the state which he outlines in the *Rechtsphilosophie* derives a significant measure of its strength from the fact that it is well formed. A well-formed state is one whose institutions are mutually reinforcing, constituting a system.⁵¹ This systematicity is important because Hegel clearly believes that the failure to engage fully in one domain of life in the state can be partially

compensated for by engagement in other domains. Indeed, as we have seen, Hegel stresses that even though Quakers and Anabaptists fail to recognize certain direct duties against the state, they nonetheless participate in the institutions of civil society. Moreover, Hegel suggests that seeing to it that individuals are granted *civil* rights in this way can play an important role in engaging and including them in the life of the state, short of full political participation. Hegel's argument for granting civil rights to Jews appeals to the fact that that is a recognition that they merit as persons who should count in civil society simply insofar as they are human beings.⁵² Guaranteeing this inclusion is significant because it buttresses the final source of the state's "strength," namely, its ability to secure the allegiance of the convictions of its members. Granting civil rights to Jews is the source of a specific "*feeling of self as legal* [*rechtliche*] persons who count in society," a feeling which can, in turn, be the root of a "desired equalization [*Angleichung*] of the mentality and disposition" of those to whom such rights are extended.⁵³

To be sure, Hegel identifies important *limits* to toleration. Since the extent to which the state can tolerate (in the "proper sense") groups not recognizing direct duties against it is determined by the state's "strength," in times of extreme emergency, it seems possible that even a "well-formed" state might, for example, have to enforce universal conscription to guarantee its preservation. Likewise, since Hegel binds moral interests so closely to their expression in church communities, the extent to which the state is obliged to tolerate individuals who have traditionally found their particular moral interests better satisfied outside of churches or religious organizations of any kind (e.g., atheists) is unclear. (If atheists are to have a place in Hegel's state, it would seem that they shall have to form a "church.") Finally, since churches are civil society organizations, which are granted an official recognition by the state, churches must countenance the state's ultimate authority. However, Hegel argues that "fanatics," those who entirely refuse to countenance the ultimate authority of the state and ethical institutions and instead subject all ethical norms to the scrutiny of their arbitrary will,⁵⁴ cannot form churches and therefore cannot expect the same kinds of protection as other civil society organizations. Since, in his later writings, Hegel suggests that Catholicism is systematically opposed to the central institutions of modern ethical life—endorsing celibacy over family life, poverty over the life of the *Bürger*, blind allegiance to the clergy over rational obedience to the laws and institutions of the state,⁵⁵ and, it should be added, popery and allegiance to the transnational

power of the church over citizenship in the state⁵⁶—it is by no means clear whether Catholics would count for Hegel as “fanatics” of this kind.

Of course, Locke too excludes certain groups from toleration—atheists and Catholics included—on the grounds that their moral and religious views are simply inconsistent with the continued endurance and stability of the state.⁵⁷ However, the view that certain religious allegiances might compromise the state's stability appears far more reasonable in Locke's case when one considers that violent religious-based schism was a much more significant threat at the end of the seventeenth century. By contrast, Hegel's arguments against Catholicism might appear to be the simple expression of the parochial biases of a nineteenth-century Protestant Swabian.

However, if we examine more carefully the *reasons* that Hegel offers for excluding certain groups from toleration, we can identify an important similarity between Hegel's view and the account of the limits of toleration that Rawls offers in *A Theory of Justice*. Most significantly, Hegel does not think that groups should be excluded from toleration on the grounds that their views are morally disagreeable. Rather, the specific content of their views is, again, not a concern of the state. (Hegel argues against the idea of a confessional state, and never endorses the idea of religious establishment.⁵⁸) Rather, the limits of toleration are established by the state's *strength*. That is, Hegel employs a *political* criterion, not a moral one, to determine the limits of toleration: What divergent views can the state continue to endure and remain the guarantor of freedom and right in the first place? Rawls employs a similar political criterion in fixing the limits of toleration. For Rawls, toleration is demanded by the first principle of justice, which requires that individuals be granted the most extensive possible scheme of equal basic liberties, among which he includes the freedom to pursue one's reflectively determined conception of the good.⁵⁹ In spite of the basic importance of liberty of conscience, Rawls nonetheless argues that toleration is limited by “the common interest in public order and security.”⁶⁰ Rawls therefore argues that interference in matters of individual conscience is legitimate in cases where action motivated by religious or moral conviction would undermine the conditions under which equal liberty can be guaranteed to all. Even though, like Hegel, Rawls anchors his account of the need for toleration in a conception of justice or right which assigns special importance to the protection of religious interests, like Hegel, Rawls argues that considerations relating to security nonetheless fix a determinate limit to toleration.⁶¹

6. Liberalism and Hegel's Social Theory

Hegel's account of subjective right is therefore sufficiently robust to provide the foundation for a defense of toleration. We have seen that Hegel's defense of toleration bears important similarities to Locke's, insofar as both anchor the need for toleration in a specific account of right which protects subjective freedom, and both identify that the moral aims which churches promote possess special importance. At the same time, we have also seen that there is an important sense in which Hegel's defense of toleration is stronger than Locke's, since Hegel also argues that subjective right even protects individuals who refrain, for religious reasons, from acknowledging certain duties to the state, and that the state that is sufficiently strong can behave liberally in enduring and tolerating such individuals. In this respect, Hegel's view more closely resembles Rawls's, since Rawls too argues that the limits of toleration are determined not by a moral criterion specifying the moral goodness of the views espoused by the individual to be tolerated, but rather by a political criterion, which determines whether toleration would undermine the conditions in which equal liberty could continue to be guaranteed to all.⁶² In short, Hegel's account of subjective right provides the materials for a strong defense of the liberal value of toleration.

However, we saw at the outset that Hegel rejects one prominent method for the justification of liberal values which Locke and Rawls both share, namely, the contractarian account of the sources of political legitimacy. Instead, Hegel derives the idea of right against which the justice of social institutions is to be measured by reflecting on the necessary social and institutional conditions for the realization of freedom. For Hegel, the normative standards that stem from the idea of right are neither arbitrary human conventions, nor "natural" (at least in one relevant sense). Rather, Hegel contends that right itself is a product of acts of *recognition*—its being is "being-recognized" (*Anerkanntsein*).⁶³ That is, Hegel stresses that right itself exists only as *instituted*, as shaping a specific ethical world by means of the influence of customs, laws, and traditional practices. For Hegel, social and political institutions are therefore not *limitations* on a natural freedom with which we are otherwise endowed, but rather, the enabling conditions of freedom itself.⁶⁴ The critique of the atomism of contract theory which we have already encountered is founded on precisely this insight, namely, that freedom is a value which we enjoy not simply as a natural matter of fact.⁶⁵ Rather, it is a condition which we accomplish only in certain social and institutional arrangements.

Hegel therefore rejects the individualism of the social contract tradition in favor of a social theory that stresses our embeddedness within specific institutional and social arrangements. It is these concrete institutions and social practices that give meaning and reality to otherwise abstract ideas of freedom and right. At the same time, even though these abstract ideas only become real or actual within shared social structures, Hegel is not thereby committed to a strong collectivism, according to which individual aims are ultimately and necessarily subordinated to a rigid and specific conception of the good. Rather, those institutions do not simply possess authority because they are traditional, but because they are indispensable conditions for the realization of freedom. As we have seen, that freedom depends on the recognition of subjective rights. In short, Hegel's social theory provides the foundations for an account of liberal values like toleration which does not presuppose the theoretical ultimacy of individual, atomistic subjects. Rather, Hegel argues that I only win my freedom through engagement in concrete social institutions and practices. The rights protecting my personhood and subjectivity—rights which speak against the possibility of a fixed and specific good which I might be obliged to promote—become real only insofar as they come to structure a shared social world.⁶⁶

Notes

1. See Rawls, 1971, 214. See also the argument for the liberty of conscience as a basic liberty in Rawls, 2005, 310–315.

2. See, for example, the remarks from the history lectures (*TW* 12, 534).

3. On this issue, see Stephen Smith's discussion of Hegel's relation to "the liberal theory of rights" in Smith, 1989, 57–97.

4. *TW* 12, 534.

5. Nussbaum sets out the basic elements of her "capabilities approach" and stresses what distinguishes it from contractarianism in Nussbaum, 2006, 69–92.

6. While Hegel therefore believes that toleration demands the protection of some forms of moral diversity as well, I shall argue that it is ultimately unclear how Hegel believes individuals who pursue their moral interests outside of traditional religious arrangements will fare in a just state.

7. Hegel uses the term "tolerance" (*Toleranz*) in the *Rechtsphilosophie* in relation to those individuals who refuse to recognize direct duties to the state and whom the state must therefore "endure." Since Hegel argues that plurality is both protected by right and good for the state, in what follows, I use the term "toleration" to refer to the protection of religious and moral diversity more generally.

While there is no cognate in Hegel's text to my "toleration," it is important to note that he *only* states that it is in relation to those who refuse to recognize direct duties against it that the state must exercise *Toleranz*.

8. The phrase is that of Walzer, 1997, 2. Montesquieu's defense of toleration is consequentialist in this way.

9. See, for example, Voltaire, 1972, 393–394: "We should tolerate each other because we are all weak, inconsistent, and subject to mutability and error."

10. Spinoza argues that sovereign power can never "prevent men from forming judgments according to their intellect, or being influenced by any given emotion," a power which belongs to individuals as a natural right. See Spinoza, 1951, 257–258.

11. Locke, 1988, 350.

12. Locke, 1990, 18.

13. Locke, 1988, 284.

14. The literature on Locke's views of toleration is extensive. For competent treatments, see Simmons, 1993, and Cranston, 1987.

15. Locke, 1990, 20.

16. Locke, 1990, 35.

17. Locke, 1990, 22.

18. With regard to a directive "that appears unlawful to the conscience of a private person," Locke claims that "such a private person is to abstain from the actions that he judges unlawful; and his is to undergo the punishment, which is not unlawful for him to bear; for the private judgment of any person concerning a law enacted in political matters, for the public good, does not take away the obligation of that law, nor deserve a dispensation" (Locke, 1990, 59–60).

19. This element of Locke's conception of toleration is well noted by Nussbaum in her study of the liberty of conscience. Hegel's position seems to be closer to the accommodationist one which Nussbaum attributes to Roger Williams than it is to Locke's. On Locke's anti-accommodationism see Nussbaum, 2008, 59ff.

20. The literature on Hegel's conception of toleration is far from extensive. See the discussion in Peperzak, 2001, 640–642. See also the discussion in Rawls, 2000, 347–348.

21. *Rph* §270 R, 415. All references to *Rph* are to the edition which appears in *TW* 7. Since so much of my account is based on the lengthy Remark to §270, I cite the page number as well.

22. *Rph* §270 R, 428.

23. *Rph* §270 R, 417–418.

24. *Rph* §270 R, 422, 420.

25. Religion is "the moment that integrates [the state] at the deepest level [*das Tiefste*] of the individual's disposition" (*Rph* §270 R, 420). On the way in which religion shapes the individual's disposition, see Brownlee, 2011–2012. I am grateful to Daniel Dahlstrom for helpful clarification of this particular passage.

26. "Religion has absolute truth as its content, and for this reason the highest element [*das Höchste*] of the disposition falls in religion" (*Rph* §270 R, 417).

27. *Rph* §270 R, 421.

28. *Rph* §270 R, 422.

29. *Rph* §270 R, 422.

30. *Rph* §137 R, 255.

31. "The true conscience is the disposition to will what is good *in and for itself*" (*Rph* §137, 254).

32. On the relationship between right and justice, see Wood, 1990, 71–73.

33. Hegel, *Rph* §29, 80. See also *Rph* §4, 46: "The basis of right is in general the *spiritual* and its proximate place and point of departure is the *will* which is free, so that freedom constitutes its substance and determinacy, and the system of right is the domain of realized freedom, the world of spirit produced from spirit itself as a second nature."

34. "That I have something in my external power constitutes *possession*, just as the particular side, that makes something mine out of natural needs, drives, and arbitrary choice is the particular interest of possession. However, the side from which, as a free will, I am objectively and thereby also for the first time an objective will, constitutes what is true and right (*Rechtliche*) in this relation, the determination of *property*" (*Rph* §45, 107).

35. See especially *Rph* §208, 360.

36. "Through the ethical, the human being has rights insofar as it has duties, and duties insofar as it has rights" (*Rph* §155, 304).

37. On this point, see again Wood, 1990, 71–73.

38. *Rph* §38, 97.

39. For a detailed account of Hegel's treatment of subjectivity, see Quante, 2004. On the role of subjectivity in Hegel's theory of ethical life, see Neuhauser, 2000, 225–255.

40. Abstract right does not include these elements of the agent's "particularity" (*Rph* §37, 96).

41. *Rph* §108, 206; §133, 250.

42. *Rph* §132, 245.

43. This is the meaning of the assertion that "Conscience knows itself as thinking, and that this my thinking which is alone obligatory [*Verpflichtende*] for me" (*Rph* §136, 254).

44. Hegel claims certain "fanatics" exemplify this form of conscience, which he also identifies as "evil." See *Rph* §270 R, 418. See also the account of evil in *Rph* §140 R, Z.

45. *Rph* §137 R.

46. It is this capacity for recognition of the goodness of my actions to which Hegel repeatedly returns in identifying the right of the subjective will. See *Rph* §107, 205; §132, 245.

47. *Rph* §270 R, 420–421.

48. *Rph* §270 R, 421.

49. See note 18.

50. I am grateful to Michelle Brady for help in clarifying this issue.

51. See Hegel's suggestion that the "power" (*Macht*) of "the ethical" derives from the fact that it consists in a "system" of laws and institutions in *Rph* §145, 294.

52. It is as "human beings" that Jews should enjoy "civil rights," which is the source of "the *feeling of self* as *legal* [*rechtliche*] persons who count in civil society" (*Rph* §270 R, 421). Hegel insists that, in civil society generally, "*The human being counts as such, because they are a human being*, not because they are a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc.," and that the human being is the concrete civil embodiment of the moral subject (*Rph* §209, 360; §190 R, 348).

53. *Rph* §270 R, 421. It is worthy of note that Hegel says that Jews become equals—we might say they are "integrated" into the state—rather than being "assimilated." (Granting civil rights accomplishes an *Angleichung*, not an *Ausgleichung*.) On the role that ethical life plays in informing the individual's "feeling of self" (*Selbstgefühl*), see *Rph* §147, 295.

54. He refers in this context to the discussion of moral "evil" in *Rph* §140, R.

55. See *Enc.* §552 R. All references to *Enc.* refer to *TW* 8–10.

56. On this point, see Taylor, 1975, 453.

57. See Israel, 2000, 103–104 and Simmons, 1993, 126–127.

58. On this score, see Hegel's rejection of the supposed desirability of a unity of church and state. *Rph* §270 R, 428.

59. Rawls, 1971, 211–216.

60. Rawls, 1971, 212.

61. One possible strategy for making sense of Hegel's possible exclusion of Catholicism from toleration would be to appeal to his insistence that Catholicism tends to breed civil instability. Hegel insists that the "security" for which Catholic princes are famous is tenuous, since it is grounded in "slavish religious obedience" (not "true eternal right" as it is in Protestant states) and is easily undermined with slight changes in existing political conditions (*TW* 12, 517).

62. It should be noted that Hegel does *not* offer an account of toleration and liberty of conscience similar to the additional account which Rawls develops in his later work, which appeals to the "burdens of judgment." For this account, see Rawls, 2005, 61. Rather, Hegel stresses that, in large measure, the citizens in a free state need to be able to identify their institutions as good for the same reasons, and his liberalism therefore should count as comprehensive. While Hegel's remarks on the importance of Protestantism to the modern state might suggest the development of an anti-liberal view, those views do not compromise the

claims concerning toleration which have been my focus here. On Protestantism in the modern state, see *Enc.* §552 R. On these issues, see Brownlee, 2011–2012. For an insightful comparative account of Hegel's and Rawls's political thought, see Houlgate, 2001.

63. *Enc.* §484.

64. This claim is most evident in Hegel's remarks in the *Enc.* discussion of lordship and bondage on the need to overcome naturalness in order to be free. Freedom rather requires standing in institutionally mediated relations of recognition with others. See *Enc.* §§431 A, 432 A.

65. See also Hegel's introductory discussion of the concept of spirit in the introduction to *Enc.*, especially §381 R: "In nature, it is not freedom, but necessity which rules."

66. I am grateful to Chris Chalmers for comments on an earlier version of this essay.

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Hegel, the Political, and the Theological

The Question of Islam

Kevin Thompson

The issue that I would like to consider in what follows concerns the relationship between the political and the theological in Hegel's thought.¹ Specifically, I want to raise what is certainly an old question—the question of the relationship, for Hegel, between Christianity, and, more precisely, Protestantism, and a rightful state—but I want to do so in what I believe is a new way, one that might allow us to grapple with this important problematic beyond the conventional debates and their well-worn positions. The question that I would like to pose here is rather simple: Can there, for Hegel, be a genuinely new form of religion *after* Christianity? That is, can a really new formation arise in the history of religion after, on Hegel's account, the historical development of religion has reached its consummation? This, for Hegel, is the question of Islam or, better, it is the question that the emergence of Islam as a possibly new kind of religion poses in Hegel's thought. But how, we rightly ask, does this allow us to reopen the question of the political and theological?

Hegel contends that Christianity and Islam are theological and political rivals. They are opposed theologically, Hegel tells us, because they both inhabit the same sphere. They are both religions of the universal and their differing ways of depicting the divine sets them in opposition to one another. But this theological conflict is, at the same time, deeply and profoundly political.

Freedom, we know, is, for Hegel, the fundamental principle of Christianity and, in the form of Protestantism, this religion, above all others, properly serves, for him, as the foundation of the modern order of right. Accordingly, Hegel charts the course of world history in the modern epoch as the progressive enlargement and realization of this principle. And it is here, on the terrain of the consummation of world history, that he believes the opposition of Christianity and Islam is played out at its most fundamental level. Islam proves to contend with Christianity for nothing less than the ultimate foundation of political authority. The opposition over universality is thus, at the same time, a struggle over the nature and ground of normativity itself.

Islam thus poses, I believe, two distinct problems for Hegel's thought. First, the rivalry between Islam and Christianity raises, at its core, the question of the proper relationship between the state and religion. Approaching this issue through the emergence of Islam allows us to see, I contend, that Hegel continually grappled with this question, especially throughout his later years in Berlin, and that this relationship remained, for him, fundamentally, and even necessarily, unsettled.

Secondly, the emergence of Islam also makes clear that what is ultimately at stake in the relationship of religion and the state is not just the foundation of political authority, but the nature of the teleology that frames Hegel's account of the historical development of both religion and right. Put simply, Hegel's understanding of teleological progression determines whether his view of the history of the relationship of the political and the theological is properly seen either as a pluralist typology or as a hegemonic narrative of totalization. I shall argue that Hegel proposes a radical rethinking of classical teleology in terms of what he calls the movement of the concept and that this requires us to reconsider what he meant when he called Christianity the consummate (*vollendete*) or revelatory (*offenbare*) religion.

The chapter, accordingly, is divided into three parts. The first considers Islam and Christianity in terms of the question of universality. It

argues that Hegel's critique of Islam ultimately centers around the concept of spirit and that this same issue is at the heart of his interpretation of Islam within the context of the relation of the sacred and the secular. The second part takes up this relationship. It shows that it remained deeply unsettled throughout the development of Hegel's mature system and that it was precisely the unresolved nature of this juncture that enabled the opposition of Christianity and Islam to emerge as a genuine rivalry. This, in turns, leads us, in part three, to a reconsideration of Hegel's theory of teleology in terms of the immanent differentiation of identity.

The key to Hegel's theory of the relationship of the political and the theological, I shall argue, lies, perhaps surprisingly, in the political theology that Hegel locates within the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. To see this, we must begin by examining Hegel's delineation of Islam and Christianity in terms of their differing underlying conceptions of universality.

To date, we actually know very little about Hegel's views of Islam. We still lack, with one significant exception, critical editions of most of the lecture courses from which the references and discussions are drawn. In fact, to date we have philologically rigorous editions only of Hegel's incomplete, often merely fragmentary, lecture manuscripts for the history of philosophy, philosophy of art, and the philosophy of world history lectures from various years (*GW* 18), an incomplete student transcript of the philosophy of art (Summer Semester 1823, *Vorlesungen* 2), a complete set of transcripts from one of the philosophy of world history courses (Winter Semester 1822/23, *Vorlesungen* 12), and Hegel's manuscript and auditor transcriptions for two of the philosophy of religion series (Summer Semester 1824 & Summer Semester 1827, *Vorlesungen* 3–5). With the exception of the philosophy of religion courses, to which I shall return, there are only scattered and passing references to the Prophet Muhammad in these documents, specifically in the world history materials, but there are no substantive accounts of Islam as a whole in any of the currently available critical editions.

Accordingly, I want to note that what follows is not meant to be a proper examination of Hegel's views about Islam.² That, I think, is beyond us at the moment. I seek simply to explore Hegel's discussions of Islam insofar as they offer what I believe is a unique and new pathway into the nature of the relationship between the theological and the political in his thought.

1. Islam, Christianity, and the Question of Universality

The sound textual evidence that we currently possess for investigating Hegel's account of Islam is, on the one hand, a passage on Sufi mysticism, in the Remark to §573, that Hegel himself composed and added to the second edition of the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* in 1827, and, on the other, a more developed discussion of Islam as a whole in relation to Christianity that appears only in the auditor transcripts of the 1824 version of the lectures on the philosophy of religion.

A. Sufi Mysticism, Pantheism, and the Trinity: Enzyklopädie (1827), §573 R

Consider first the passage from the second edition of the *Enzyklopädie*. The textual and historical context of this discussion is extremely important. In the Remark, Hegel invokes the thirteenth-century Sufi poet and mystic Rumi³ in the course of a fairly detailed discussion of the relationship of philosophy to religion. Hegel is arguing, as he typically does when addressing this issue, that philosophy and religion are distinct forms of knowledge—the one, speculative, the other, representational—that nonetheless share a common object, the absolute. His principal concern in the Remark is with the charge that any form of philosophy that takes the absolute for its object, that is, speculative philosophy itself, is fundamentally pantheistic, that it has, as Hegel puts the accusation, “*too much (zu viel) of God*” (*Enc.* [1827] §573 R; *GW* 19, 405).

The figure behind this charge becomes evident in the note in which Hegel actually quotes (somewhat inaccurately) extensive translated passages from Rumi's poetry. Hegel refers there to two individuals: Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866), the translator of the passages and a poet in his own right who introduced numerous German intellectuals during this period to works of Persian literature,⁴ and Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck (1799–1877), a scholar and preacher who had, among other work, edited and introduced a collection of eastern mystical writings.⁵

Tholuck's importance here, however, extends, I believe, well beyond the confines of his anthology. He was, until 1825, a member of the faculty of theology at the University of Berlin and, along with his senior colleague, Friedrich Schleiermacher, one of the principal advocates of the academic and popular revival of (Late Romantic) Pietism. As such, Tholuck was well known as a leader in the critique of speculative philosophy

as a form of knowledge deeply opposed to history and tradition. And it is precisely Tholuck's appeal to the history and tradition of theological doctrine that proves to be what is ultimately at stake in the charge about pantheism.

In a work entitled *Die speculative Trinitätslehre des späteren Orients* (1826), Tholuck explored the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity, arguing that the true origin of this dogma lay not in what he claimed was authentic early Christianity.⁶ Instead, the idea of a triune godhead had been, Tholuck asserted, incorporated into the Christian theological tradition from Neoplatonism and, in particular, from its development in the East. Most importantly for our concerns here, Tholuck proposed that the true roots of the doctrine lie in what was *even then* considered an improbable source: Islam.

Now we know from one of Hegel's letters that he received a copy of this text from the author and, in this letter, Hegel offered several criticisms of the work, though he did not there challenge the content of its central thesis concerning the historical origins of the doctrine of the Trinity.⁷ Of course, Tholuck's claim is clearly, at best, highly dubious, especially given the long and consistent history of Islamic critique of Christianity over its failure to adhere to a genuine monotheism precisely because of the doctrine of the Trinity, its, as it was called, "tritheism." But, setting aside the merits of Tholuck's thesis, this work does allow us to begin to make sense of Hegel's linkage of Sufi mysticism and the pantheism charge in the passage at issue (§573 R). For Tholuck had proclaimed that the Trinity is, as he put it, mere "decorative timbering (*Fachwerk*)" and not part of the proper foundation for the renewal of a truly authentic Christian faith. Any form of thought that took the divine to be in any sense plural, and in that sense, differentiated, for Tholuck, was therefore guilty of a form of pagan pantheism. And this is precisely what he charged Hegel's thought with doing. Tholuck's accusation, we could thus say, was that speculative philosophy is, perhaps paradoxically, "too much of God" because the God of which it speaks is not the one Lord of the heart, but the complexly differentiated being of the concept, and thus of the intellect. In this sense, for Tholuck, Hegel's thought had betrayed the primal Christian faith and, in this, stood all too close to Islam, and, as a result, all too close to what Tholuck saw as this faith's deeply mystical, pantheistic core.

Accordingly, Hegel's discussion of Rumi and mystical pantheism in the main body of the Remark is, I believe, best read as a subtle response

to Tholuck's accusation and it therefore constitutes a continuation of the confrontation with Tholuck, and, behind this, with the Neo-Pietism of Schleiermacher, that Hegel had famously set at the center of the preface to the second edition (1827) of the *Enzyklopädie* and that had already begun, in full polemical force, of course, with his famous foreword to Hermann Friedrich Wilhelm Hinrichs's book in 1822.⁸

Consider now Hegel's line of argument in the main body of the Remark. His initial move is to show that a wholly abstract conception of the divine lies at the heart of Pietism. God is held here, Hegel says, to be an "abstract universality, from which all determinacy falls outside (*außerhalb . . . fällt*)" (*Enc.* [1827], §573 R; *GW* 19, 406). God is thus distinct from the domain of finite things, the realm of concrete determinacy. But such things, unlike God here, have their own being and thus whatever is determinate in the divine must be constituted by the finite. Hence, Hegel argues, the piety of immediate faith is driven, precisely by virtue of the emptiness of its sense of God, to equate the divine and the worldly, the infinite and the finite, to change, as Hegel puts it, "that [abstract] universality into what they call the pantheistic: all (empirical things without distinction, whether regarded more highly or lowly) is, substantiality holds, and this being of worldly things is God" (*Enc.* [1827], §573 R; *GW* 19, 407).

Hegel's next move is to question whether any philosopher, or, in fact, whether even any human being, has really ever held this position. That is, has there ever really been a pantheist *in this sense*? Hegel marshals the evidence of religious and poetic representations that Tholuck, in particular, claimed were proper exemplars of pantheism. Among these, Hegel singles out Islam and the mysticism of Rumi. In doing so, he takes on the very center of Tholuck's argument that his own speculative philosophy is an incipient form of Islamic mystical pantheism.

Rumi's poetic depiction of love shows us, Hegel says, the unity of the soul with God as an "*elevation above (Erhebung über)* the finite and the commonplace, a transfiguration (*Verklärung*) of the natural and the spiritual, in which precisely the externality, the transience of immediate nature, and of empirical worldly spirit, is discarded and absorbed (*ausgeschieden und absorbiert*)" (*Enc.* [1827], §573 R; *GW* 19, 410). Hegel argues that this is not pantheistic; there is no identification of the sacred and the profane here. Rather, what we find is classical monotheism where the empirical is subordinated, "discarded and absorbed," in the sublime

beyond, the vacuous infinity of abstract universality. But this is precisely the conception of God that undergirds Pietism. Hegel thus turns Tholuck's accusation back upon him. It is Pietism, not speculative philosophy, that stands in league with Islamic mysticism.

Hegel concludes his response by identifying the root of the problem that Rumi, and by implication now Pietism as well, share: "Of the Oriental and especially the Islamic modes of representing God, we may rather say that the absolute appears as the *utterly universal genus* that dwells in the species or existences, but in such a way that these have no actual reality. The defect of all these modes of representation and systems is that they do not proceed to define substance as *subject* and as *spirit*" (*Enc.* [1827], §573 R; *GW* 19, 412). Hegel's critique is thus that both Islamic mysticism and Pietism operate within the framework of the traditional form of abstract, rather than genuinely concrete, universality. Such universality is marked by the way that it subsumes individuality by taking it to be a particular instance of itself. The god of monotheism is thus the "utterly universal genus" that subsumes all as species, but in doing so, it renders the finite illusory; it has, as Hegel says, "no actual reality." Speculative philosophy, on the other hand, is defined by the concrete form of universality where the genus only is what it is in and through its specification, that is, the universal is nothing other than the process of coming to be what it is, coming back to itself, in and through its immanent differentiation, a movement that Hegel terms thinking substance as subject, or simply, as spirit.

Hegel is clearly at pains, in 1827, to mark out what he sees as the fundamental distance between speculative philosophy and the inherently abstract monotheisms exemplified by both Islamic mysticism and German Pietism. However, when we turn back to the earlier and broader account of Islam as a whole that we find in the transcripts of the 1824 lecture course on the philosophy of religion, we are able to uncover the original conceptual space within which this critique first originated: the relationship of the theological and the political.

B. The Theological-Political Opposition of Islam and Christianity: The 1824 Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion

The auditor reports from the 1824 lecture course that Hegel devoted to the philosophy of religion clearly show that it was here that he first

began to develop the central idea of the critique of Islam that he was to set forth publicly against Islamic mysticism in 1827: Islam is a religion defined by a conception of God as a wholly other, sublime beyond, an abstract universality. The transcripts depict Hegel as proclaiming that, in Islam, the vocation of the devout is “to submerge one’s self in the unity of God, of the infinite. Thus the subject has no private purpose, and no absolute purpose other than that of willing themselves to exist for the One, and it alone, of making their sole purpose the glory of the one God” (*Vorlesungen* 5, 290–291).

But Hegel goes further here and develops a quite different context for this criticism. Whereas in the *Enzyklopädie* the issue is the relationship of philosophy to religion and, in particular, responding to Tholuck’s charge, in the lecture course, the context is clearly the domain of political theology. But what exactly does this mean? And why does an account of Islam belong properly here?

In the 1824 lecture course, Hegel sets his account of the historical emergence of Islam in terms of its being what he calls the “opposite (*Gegensatz*)” of Christianity. Islam and Christianity are opposed because Islam, Hegel explains, “stands in the same sphere (*auf gleicher Sphäre*) with the Christian religion” (*Vorlesungen* 5, 291), the sphere of universality. But the difference that sets them into opposition with one another is, of course, the nature of this universality. For Islam, God remains abstract, while, for Christianity, God is concrete and this is fundamentally expressed, Hegel contends, in the doctrine of the Trinity. But if, as Hegel argues, Christianity is the religion that historically brings to culmination the very concept of religion itself, then how could such an opposition between faiths even arise? That is, how could there be a religion after Christianity?

Islam remains abstract, Hegel argues, because it is fundamentally incapable of depicting God as necessarily concrete. This, of course, is Hegel’s well-known critique of various sorts of strictly monotheistic religions. As far as this goes, though, Islam would be little more than a return to a prior form of religion, one that had been taken up in the development of Christianity. But, as such, it would not constitute a genuine rival to Christianity; it would not stand in the same sphere and contend there for supremacy. What, then, for Hegel, makes such a confrontation as this possible?

The key to answering this question lies in the very doctrine that separates the two faiths—the Trinity—and the profoundly *political* nature

of Hegel's interpretation of this central dogma. For Hegel contends that the Trinity is not simply an article of orthodoxy. It is, more fundamentally, the religious representation of the fundamental philosophical truth that for a concept to be what it is, it must differentiate itself and thereby, precisely through this immanent dispersal, come into its own. The decisive moment of the Trinity, Hegel holds, is its conception of the spiritual presence of Christ, his resurrection, which, for Hegel, of course, is not embodied in the transformed physical substance of Jesus, but rather in the practices and institutions of the community of Christian faith. The body of believers is thus not simply those who remain faithful to the purportedly risen Lord. Rather, this community is itself the embodiment of God, God's dispersion, as spirit. Its historical development, inaugurated by the resurrection, is the working out of the reconciliation between the infinite and the finite that Christianity uniquely portrays as begun in this pivotal event. Spirit, for Hegel, is thus nothing less than the process of historical development itself and the "realization of faith," as he calls it, is a worldly occurrence that is, he maintains, profoundly political. And it is precisely within this social and political context that the possibility for the emergence of a rival to Christianity, such as Islam, arises.

Because Christianity is the religion of reconciliation between the divine and the human, it enables the individual, the community, and the social world that it shapes to be genuinely free. Hegel, accordingly, constructs an account of the course of world history in the lectures in terms of the progressive enlargement of the scope of this reconciliation: what begins in the *hearts* of the early believers, develops into the institution of the *Church*, and then, finally, comes to its culmination in the domain of *ethical life* (*Sittlichkeit*) where freedom is embodied in the social and political institutions of a rightful state (cf. *Vorlesungen* 5, 167–174). World history is thus a progressive development of the relationship between Christianity and the political. World history is pneumatology.

It follows that in recognizing Islam as a genuine rival to Christianity, Hegel is, at the same time, acknowledging that the proper relationship between the secular and the sacred, between the modern state and the religion that undergirds it, remains fundamentally unresolved, that the two remain in an ongoing state of tension. This is because the terrain of world history is defined by the unfolding of spirit and this movement inherently includes the possibility of such an unsettled juncture of the political and the theological. A genuinely new religion is thus able to arise and it would do so, on this analysis, as a contender for the ultimate

foundation of normativity. Hegel's historical interpretation of the Holy Spirit—his reading of pneumatology as the course of history itself, the history wherein God becomes what God is—means then that the work of reconciliation is deeply temporal and, as such, the actualization of faith can remain incomplete; and because such an incompleteness is intrinsic to the immanent differentiation of the absolute, a space is therefore necessarily open for the contestation of right, a space that is now marked by the emergence of a new religious form and a rival for the foundation of political authority: Islam.

Hegel argues, in the concluding moments of the lectures in 1824, that the resolution of this conflict cannot be achieved by or within the community of faith; the tension of the secular and the sacred outstrips its purview. Such a task as this stands as the uniquely historical vocation of philosophy in the modern world: “to reconcile reason with religion in all its manifold forms, and to recognize them as at least necessary” (*Vorlesungen* 5, 175). But this claim leaves us, it would seem, with as many questions as it does solutions. In the sections that follow, we must confine ourselves to an examination of only two of the most profound of these problems: (1) If the emergence of Islam as a genuine rival to Christianity is made possible by the unsettled state of the relationship between the theological and the political, what is the nature of this relationship? and (2) If the historical, social task of philosophy is to integrate reason and the diversity of religion and to see the latter as, in some sense, necessary, then what does this mean for the nature of the consummate religion and for the teleology to which its very name refers?

2. Islam, Christianity, and the Relation of the Sacred and the Secular

The relationship of the political and theological is an issue with which Hegel continually grappled throughout the Berlin period. He consistently held that the state is conceptually and historically founded upon what he calls the Christian principle of the self-consciousness of freedom and, more particularly, on the Protestant principle that requires that all claimants to authority must vindicate themselves before the court of reason. But Hegel's account of the nature of this founding relationship underwent a significant shift between the publication of the *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821) and the third edition of the *Enzyklopädie*

(1830). At its core, this shift has to do with the status of religion within ethical life itself.⁹ Put schematically, Hegel initially, in the *Philosophie des Rechts*, appears to have held to a form of the Lutheran dyarchic theory wherein the church and state are seen as two distinct and separate kingdoms. In the final edition of the *Enzyklopädie*, however, he rejects this doctrine arguing, instead, that religion is integral to ethical life itself and thus to the state.

Now the significance of this shift for our concerns here is that it allows us to see that it was precisely during the period in which Hegel was developing his analysis of Islam and Christianity as theological and political rivals that he was also rethinking the very nature of the relationship between the theological and the political. With the shift from the dyarchic to the integrationist model, the stakes of this confrontation are raised immensely and this, in turn, compels us to reconsider the political standing of consummate religion itself. What then does it mean, for Hegel, to say that religion, and Christianity, in particular, is the foundation (*Grundlage*) of the state?

In his initial discussion of this issue, in the famous Remark to §270 of the *Philosophie des Rechts*, Hegel argues that since its content is “absolute truth,” religion as such, whatever its form, serves to forge a disposition (*Gesinnung*) among the citizenry, a motivational orientation that takes its bearings from this normative standard and demands that the authoritativeness of the state, as well as the bindingness of its laws and duties, be validated and justified against the immutability of this foundation. In this sense, religion cultivates the affective and cognitive endorsement necessary to sustain and support the legitimacy of the state and to attest to its authority. It is thus precisely as an institution and practice that inculcates such an ethical mindedness, a character that is shaped by the persistence of absolute immutability, that religion, for Hegel, properly serves as the foundation of the state. But, Hegel immediately cautions, “it is at the same time only a *foundation*” (*Rph* §270 R).

To say this is to say that religion, in both its doctrine and its practice, despite the absoluteness of its object, nonetheless remains tied to subjectivity. It is always and necessarily, at its core, a matter of feeling and conviction. As such, if it is not rooted firmly in the governance of ethical actuality, then it threatens to raise precisely such subjective responses to the status of the determining ground of right, and thereby to expose the social and political institutions and the laws and constitutional structures that regulate them to the ever-changing vagaries of mere opinion and

the insecurities of caprice and whim. Down this road, Hegel holds, lies the abandonment of all forms of authority, nothing less than, as he puts it, “religious *fanaticism*” (*Rph* §270 R).

But, if religion, whatever its shape, instead “acknowledges and upholds” the authority of the state (*Rph* §270 R), if it issues the state “religious authentication (*Beglaubigung*)” (*Rph* §270 R), then it brings to the political domain a citizenry ripe and ready for the rule of law and the institutions of formation. For this reason, Hegel concludes, the state ought to be permitted to require (though not to compel) its citizens to be members of those forms of religious community that serve this crucial ethical function.¹⁰

In turn, the state is obligated to refrain from intruding into the religious sphere, whether in its practice or its doctrine: “the state fulfills a duty by giving the community (*Gemeine*) every assistance and protection in the pursuit of its religious ends” (*Rph* §270 R). In this way, Hegel sets in place a unique interpretation of the doctrine of the two kingdoms.¹¹ Religion is the foundation of the state, *but it is not its substance*. The theological and the political each retain their own source of validity and authority within themselves.¹²

Now, although Hegel offers no explicit treatment of Islam here, it seems clear that, under this model, it would fall under the same scheme of rights and duties as any other form of religion. As long as it is able to recognize and accredit the authority of the state and instill these values in its adherents, which is to say, as long as it serves the social function that Hegel ascribes here to religion generally and thereby does not fall prey to its inherently subjective fount of validity and become fanatical—a stricture, we must recall, that, due to the nature of religion itself, for Hegel, applies to all faiths equally—then the integrity of its domain of doctrine and practice would have to be accorded the same set of legal protections and entitlements as any other faith tradition.

Hegel’s original formulation of the relationship of the state and religion can thus be seen as a distinctive variant not only of the Lutheran dyarchic theory, but even of the Lockean doctrine of religious toleration. However, as he continued to grapple with this issue, Hegel came to believe that this conception was untenable. As it separated religion and the domain of the ethical, it rendered religion, in particular, a mere abstraction, a form of life dependent for its actuality on the substantiality of the state. On this model, then, without any actuality of its own to undergird its belief and practice, religion would be left either to seek to

establish its own independent form of ethical life, separate and perhaps in conflict with the state, a pathway bearing the continual threat of fanaticism, or it would be reduced to having no genuinely ethical content of its own, serving solely as a subsidiary and nonessential endorsement of the state, whose justification lies wholly in itself, a path that would render religious life, in effect, vacuous.

In the extensive additions Hegel made to the Remark to §552 for the third edition (1830) of the *Enzyklopädie*, he forcefully rejects precisely this separation of the theological and the political, saying that “[i]t has been the immense error of our times to want to regard these inseparables [religion and ethical life] as separable from, even as indifferent to, one another” (*Enc.* [1830], §552 R; *GW* 20, 532). Religion, here (in 1830), is thus no longer merely the foundation of the state; it is nothing less than “the substantiality of ethical life itself and of the state” (*Enc.* [1830], §552 R; *GW* 20, 532). The concept of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) clearly stands at the core of this crucial shift. Hegel moves this notion beyond that achieved in the *Philosophie des Rechts* and does so precisely by restoring to it some of its earlier, Jena period sense of being the element that subtends, integrates, and reconciles the domains of the state, art, religion, and philosophy.

Already in the material he added to this Remark for the second edition (1827), Hegel had argued that religion is “thinking ethical life, i.e., ethical life becoming conscious of the free universality of its concrete essence” and that, as such, “to seek for genuine religion and religiosity outside of ethical spirit is therefore in vain” (*Enc.* [1827], §552 R; *GW* 19, 390). His treatment of the relationship between the state and religion in 1830 thus works out the implications of this correction. Specifically, he holds that “there cannot be double conscience (*zweierlei Gewissen*), a religious conscience and an ethical conscience, [the latter] differing from [the former] in substance and content” (*Enc.* [1830], §552 R; *GW* 20, 532). The content of the religious form of knowing is absolute truth and this content, though, to be sure, not its religious form, therefore necessarily holds normative authority over the empirical, conditioned actuality of ethical life: “hence, for self-consciousness, religion is the basis (*Basis*) of ethical life and the state” (*Enc.* [1830], §552 R; *GW* 20, 532).

On this integrationist model, then, the stakes of the status of religion in general are raised significantly. There is no longer the simple dyarchic separation of the sacred and the secular, the Lockean toleration of theological plurality within the space of right. Though the two are,

to be sure, not identified, the state, nonetheless, now literally rests upon religion, objective spirit upon absolute spirit.

Now I believe that the 1824 lectures on the philosophy of religion are best read as showing that Hegel had *already* begun to make precisely this shift in his thinking, for what is at issue there in the rivalry between Islam and Christianity, as we saw, is nothing less than which form of religion will stand normative over, will be the basis for, ethical life itself and thus over the state; it is a confrontation over the space of the political itself. But how then is this conflict to be decided?

The integrationist model offers a quite different way of articulating the relation between the diversity of religious forms and the social and political structures and practices of right. The opposition that Hegel had, in 1821, located between the state and religion—namely, that between, to put it simply, freedom and unfreedom—he now holds to be endemic to the historical development of religion itself: “As the inseparability of the two sides has been indicated, it is of interest to note the separation that appears on the side of religion” (*Enc.* [1830], §552 R; *GW* 20, 533). Though all religions share the same content, they differ in the form in which they grasp this matter, and this difference, of course, is the basis for Hegel’s account of the historical development of religion.¹³

In place of the separation of state and religion, then, we find ourselves back, as we did in the 1824 lectures, at world history. Hegel reorients the unsettled juncture between the theological and the political from a struggle *between* the two, between the state and religion, to a struggle *within* religion itself, a struggle that defines, for him, the very development of modernity itself. It follows that the rivalry between Islam and Christianity to be the substance of ethical life can only be a confrontation *within* the framework laid down by the consummate religion itself, one that resides precisely in its historical development. And this brings us back, albeit with just what is truly at stake now clear, to the question of teleological necessity, the question with which we began this study: Can there, for Hegel, be a genuinely new form of religion, that is, as we can now see, can there be a new basis for ethical life itself *after* Christianity?

3. Hegel’s Theory of Teleology

The “after” in this question adeptly lays bare the fundamental issue. Can a really new formation arise in the history of religion after, on Hegel’s

account, the historical development of religion has reached its consummation or must any such form simply follow on the terrain already set down by the culmination that preceded it? As we can now see, the emergence of Islam calls into question, for Hegel, both the very concept of Christianity as the consummate (*vollendete*) religion and its standing as the proper substance of right and, in so doing, it proves that at the heart of the relationship of the political and theological, in Hegel's thought, lies the question of teleology. In other words, it asks us what does it mean, as he put it in the 1824 lectures, "to reconcile reason with religion in all its manifold forms, and to recognize them as at least necessary" (*Vorlesungen* 5, 175)? We conclude, then, with an all too brief reconsideration of this crucial issue.

To do so, we take our bearings, once again, from Hegel's doctrine of the Trinity and, in particular, his pneumatological world history. As we saw earlier, Christianity necessarily is, on Hegel's account, a historical religion because it represents the divine as spirit. Hegel argues that the structure of this temporal development is intelligible because the truth that underlies it is the movement of the concept.

Now, on a fairly conventional reading, this movement is an instance of the classical conception of teleological necessity. As such, Christianity brings the history of religion to its culmination because it, and it alone, embodies the template of the divine that was always already at work in this development guiding its progression. It would follow, on this view, that the concrete historical shapes that religion takes are secondary to the form that they serve and that the final shape embodies most fully. On this scheme, then, Hegel's teleology would authorize a simple hierarchy of religions and the discord between the substance of ethical life and its form that Hegel identifies in this history would dictate that Islam, and any other contender for the place of Christianity in ethical life, would have to be subsumed under its authority. Such a teleology would thus entail that Islam could come after Christianity only if it subordinated itself or was subdued, by force if necessary, to the higher truth that Christianity more fully and completely reveals. To be consummate would thus be to be hegemonic.

But, as we have shown, the conceptual issue between Christianity and Islam is the distinction between abstract and concrete views of universality and it is precisely from the latter that Hegel—in the *Subjective Logic* of the *Wissenschaft der Logik* (1812, 1813, 1816), but elsewhere as well—seeks to rethink classical teleology. The concept, he demonstrates,

is what it is only in and through its immanent self-differentiation. It is nothing unto itself, prior, so to speak, to its differentiation. Accordingly, the concept of religion is nothing unto itself. It comes to be what it is only in and through its becoming other. And it is in and through this process that the Christian religion has what religion as such is for its object. It is in this sense, and this alone, that we properly speak of it as consummate. As a result, the classical model of final causality cannot simply be foisted wholesale upon Hegel's account of history and the history of religion in particular. Christianity is distinct from other religions, for Hegel, because it depicts the divine as the movement of concrete universality, as spirit—this is what makes it revelatory—and this means that the absolute is nothing other than the various determinations that arise in and through its process of differentiation; God becomes what God is only in and through the rich diversity of historically determinate forms of religion. To be the consummate religion would thus mean to be nothing other than the complete process of divine differentiation.

Now if this reading proves to be more textually and systematically faithful to Hegel's thought, as I believe it is, then it bears two important implications for the issues that we have sought to examine here. First, Hegel's thought would possess the resources, precisely within its doctrine of the historicity of religion, even the historicity of Christianity, to account for the possibility of the emergence of a genuine political rivalry between Islam and Christianity. For if Christianity is the proper substance of ethical life, and if it is defined by a historical pneumatology rooted in the movement of the concrete universal, then a separation between its concept and its shapes is necessarily endemic to its very nature. As a result, the theological substance of the state would always, and necessarily, be unsettled within itself and, thus, so too would the relationship between this substance and the domain of right that rests upon it. Hence, an opening for a rival to its authority, a contest over right itself, would be inherent in the very concept of Christianity itself.

Secondly, if Christianity is, as Hegel claims, the culmination of the concept of religion itself insofar as it uniquely reveals the divine to be a process of immanent differentiation, then Hegel's account can be said to enable us to rethink the nature of Islam, precisely as a determinate form of religion, beyond the critique that Hegel himself offers of it. We could see Islam not simply as a late repetition of abstract monotheism, as Hegel proclaimed, but, along with its expansion to universal election, it might be said to offer a genuinely new concept of the divine as well,

a new way of conceiving of the oneness or indivisibility of God's essence (*Tawhīd*) and the inherence (or not) of the multiplicity of God's attributes ("the most beautiful names").

In sum, then, we have seen that, though he rarely spoke of it, Islam poses a decisive challenge for Hegel's thought. It forces us to rethink that he meant by universality, right, and teleology. By tracing the reverberations of the rivalry between Islam and Christianity through several strands in his corpus, we have been able to show, in a profoundly new way, just how the question of the political and the theological necessarily opens upon that of the teleological. Can there then be a genuinely new religion, a new basis for ethical life, *after* Christianity? Only if such a religion, if Christianity, moves beyond the rigidity of doctrines and embodies the movement of spirit. Such a religion, Hegel would say, would be truly consummate, truly absolute, and that is to say, paradoxically perhaps, truly Christian, precisely only insofar as it moves through Christianity to leave it behind, to open up to its own rival both theologically and politically.

Notes

1. All references to Hegel's work are by the following abbreviations:
Enc. (1827) *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1827), ed. W. Bonsiepen and H.-C. Lucas, *GW*, 19.
Enc. (1830) *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1830), ed. W. Bonsiepen and H.-C. Lucas, *GW*, 20.
Vorlesungen *Vorlesungen: Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983–).
2. For preliminary research in this area, neither of which, unfortunately, adequately recognizes the host of philological challenges involved in this endeavor, see Almond, 2010, esp. chap. 6, and Steunebrink, unpublished.
3. Jalaluddin Rumi, Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī also known as Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmi (1207–1272).
4. Rückert's translations of Rumi appeared in *Taschenbuch für Damen auf das Jahr 1821* (Tübingen, 1821).
5. Tholuck, 1825.
6. Tholuck, 1826, esp. chap. 1.
7. Hegel acknowledged receipt of *Die speculative Trinitätslehre des späteren Orients* from the author in a letter to Tholuck dated July 3, 1826. In it, he challenged Tholuck's basic methodology: "Does not the sublime Christian knowledge of God as Triune merit respect of a wholly different order than comes from

ascribing it merely to such an externally historical course?" (see Hoffmeister, 1952–1981, Vol. I, Letter Number 514a).

8. For a useful overview of the contentious relationship between Hegel and Schleiermacher, see Crouter, 2005, chap. 3.

9. Cf. Jaeschke, 1979, esp. 356–358.

10. As a consequence, Hegel says, the state is able to overlook and tolerate a wide diversity of religious belief and practice, even to the point of those faith communities, such as the Quakers and Anabaptists, among others, who refuse to participate in the common defense (cf. *Rph* §270 R).

11. Hegel separates the civil and the ecclesiastical in ways that clearly go beyond even that enshrined in Prussian law at the time, where the monarch was *summus episcopus*. On this point, see Jaeschke, 1979, 354.

12. Religion, according to this view, borrows the ethical form of life from the state and founds it upon subjective conviction. The state, on the other hand, while it benefits from the confirmation that religious doctrine and practice afford, is able to stand secular and independent of this field and possesses its justification wholly in itself.

13. Consequently, in place of a rationale for religious toleration, Hegel sets out what has come to be an infamous account of the historical development of the consummate religion, Christianity, in terms of the confessional division between Catholicism, and what Hegel takes to be its fundamental denial of the political, and Protestantism, which he believes embraces and thus properly grounds its fundamental structures.

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The Active Fanaticism of Political and Religious Life

Hegel on Terror and Islam

Will Dudley

Hegel says so much, about so many things, that his rare silences are conspicuous and significant. Among the topics about which he remains largely silent, Islam stands out as one of the most surprising. Indisputably a world-historical phenomenon for well over a millennium before Hegel's birth, Islam would seem to deserve a prominent place in his extensive account of determinate religion. And yet it receives no proper discussion: whereas Hegel accords systematic significance to Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and to the religions of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans—he mentions Islam only in passing, first in the course of his treatment of Judaism, and then again in his account of Christianity, where he links it once more to the Jewish religion, but also, intriguingly, to the French Revolution. Hegel describes Islam and the French Revolution as two manifestations of abstract formalism, and goes on to assert, without qualification: “the religion of Islam is essentially fanatical.”¹ The *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* also associates the ancient religion

of Mohammed with the political upheaval in modern France, declaring: “‘Religion and terror’ was the principle [of Islam], [just] as ‘Liberty and terror’ was [the principle of] Robespierre.”²

This chapter addresses three related questions: First, why does Islam play such a limited role in Hegel’s system? Second, on what basis does Hegel justify his claim that Islam is essentially fanatical and terrorizing? Third, what insights does Hegel offer regarding the overcoming of religious fanaticism? Attempting to answer these questions will lead us to examine the structural analogy Hegel identifies between Islam and the French Revolution.

1. The Absence of Islam from Hegel’s Philosophy of Religion

Hegel’s systematic account of religion begins with a specification of the concept of religion itself. Religion, in Hegel’s view, is like art and philosophy in that it is a means by which human beings come to know the truth. But whereas art allows us to see or hear the truth, and philosophy gives us the truth in conceptual form, religion enables us to feel the truth. Feeling, as Hegel defines it, is the subjective connection to a content, and it is this subjective connection to the truth that the doctrines and practices of religion seek to establish.

If religion is to give us a felt connection to the truth, rather than to something else, it must present the truth in a way that is not only emotionally powerful but also determinate. Religions do so by developing symbolic myths and ritual practices that attempt to represent the truth in ways capable of evoking a felt response. Hegel judges each religion according to the ability of its doctrine and practices to arouse feeling for the truth. Because all religious doctrines and practices are capable of arousing powerful feelings, the sole criterion for such judgment is the extent to which the truth is in fact adequately represented by the myths and rituals that comprise each particular religion.³

At the center of each religion is its portrayal of God, which Hegel calls “a representation of the philosophical idea that we make for ourselves.”⁴ Each historical religion has, in Hegel’s view, furnished its God with the qualities that best represent its understanding of the truth. It is well known that Hegel thinks that Christianity represents the truth most successfully, and for this reason he refers to it as “the consummate religion.” Hegel regards other religions as imagining God in ways that represent the truth only partially.

Although there is no limit to the number of particular religions that may develop in the course of human history, Hegel believes there are only a finite number of ways in which God may be conceived, and thus only a finite number of conceptually distinct religions. His account of determinate religion claims to provide an exhaustive survey of these religious possibilities, while also identifying the historical religion that best realizes each of them. For example: Buddhism is the religion of being-within-self; Zoroastrianism is the religion of light; and the Greeks developed the religion of beauty.

But Islam has no place in this story, because Hegel does not regard Islam as the primary instantiation of any of the basic forms of religion. Consequently, as we have noted, he discusses Islam only incidentally, in the midst of sections devoted to Judaism (which instantiates the religion of sublimity) and Christianity (which instantiates the religion of the concept).

Peter Hodgson, editor of the English edition of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, speculates that "the reason Islam lacks a place in Hegel's schema of determinate religions . . . appears to be that, unlike the other religions, Islam does not represent an earlier phase of religious consciousness that has been or can be sublated in the consummate religion. Rather it stands in antithesis to Christianity as a contemporary rival."⁵

But this explanation cannot be correct, because Hegel asserts quite clearly that Islam has in fact already been historically sublated. He writes: "In its spread [Islam] founded many kingdoms and dynasties. . . . [And] proportioned to the rapidity of the Arab conquests, was the speed with which the arts and sciences attained among them their highest bloom. . . . Science and knowledge, especially that of philosophy, came from the Arabs into the West. . . . But the great empire of the Caliphs did not last long . . . [and] Islam has long vanished from the stage of history at large."⁶ Thus Islam is no different in this respect than Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism: all continue to be living religions, in the sense that they have many contemporary adherents, but Hegel regards each of them as having been conceptually and historically superseded by Christianity. The question remains, then, why does Islam, unlike these other religions, not have a place in Hegel's schema of determinate religions?

Richard Winfield suggests that Hegel's schema is incomplete, and that the missing conceptual form is precisely the religious type instantiated by Islam. Winfield describes the possibility missed by Hegel as "the form of religion that represents the divine as an absolute will whose commands are directed not at one chosen people, but at all humanity."⁷

The form in Hegel's schema most closely related to the one proposed by Winfield is the religion of sublimity, exemplified by Judaism. In the religion of sublimity, Hegel writes, "Apart from the one purpose [of God there is] no right that stands in and for itself in the existent world, no absolute purpose or content. . . . It is only fear of the Lord, only absolute submission [to his will] that is valid."⁸ But in Judaism the Lord commands only one particular nation: "Jehovah was only the God of that one people—the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob: only with the Jews had God made a covenant; only to this people had he revealed himself."⁹ Islam, in Hegel's view, retains the basic religious concept that defines Judaism. Quoting the book of Exodus, he writes: "There is only one God, and he is a jealous God who will have no other gods before him. This is the great thesis of Jewish and of Arab religion. . . . [In] Judaism [and] Islam . . . [it is a matter of] commandments as such, of orders; laws and service alike [are just] the Lord's commands."¹⁰ The salient difference between the two religions, according to Hegel, is that "the scope of servitude is broadened in Islam (being cleansed of nationalism)."¹¹ Or, as Winfield puts the same point: "Whereas Jewish religious law applies without discrimination to all Jews, Islam extends this universality beyond the limits of a particular people, joining Christianity in the ranks of religions that proselytize, offering a way of relating to the divine that is inherently good for all."¹²

Hegel and Winfield thus agree about the basic relationship between Judaism and Islam. The two religions share the same content (the conception of God as sublime) but differ in form (Judaism is particular, restricting God's domain to the chosen people, whereas Islam is universal, expanding God's domain to encompass all human beings). Winfield draws the conclusion that this difference in form is sufficient to require the insertion of an additional possibility in Hegel's schema of religious types. But Hegel is quite consistent in not doing so, for as we have seen, he distinguishes religious types according to their conceptions of God. Because Judaism and Islam share the same conception of God, and differ only in form or scope, Hegel regards them not as two types of religion, but rather as two instantiations of a single religious type, the religion of sublimity.

Because Judaism emerged prior to Islam, it has the honor of representing their shared religious type in Hegel's account of determinate religion. Islam does not merit its own treatment, in Hegel's view, because it does not represent a truly novel religious development, but rather a

formal modification of Judaism. Islam is therefore discussed within the section on the religion of sublimity, and only to the extent necessary to explain the formal difference between these two historical religions. Most of the section is devoted to an explication of the conception of God that defines the religion of sublimity, and to the initial manifestation of this conception in the Jewish religion.

We now have an answer to our first question: Hegel gives Islam a very limited role in his system because he regards it not as a conceptually distinctive religious type, but rather as a formal variation on Judaism: Islam universalizes the religion of sublimity. But this leads to our second question: why does Hegel hold that the universalized religion of sublimity is essentially fanatical?

2. Fanaticism and Islam

Hegel defines fanaticism as “an enthusiasm for something abstract—for an abstract thought which sustains a negative position toward the established order of things. It is the essence of fanaticism to bear only a desolating, destructive relation to the concrete.”¹³ In the introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*, he explains such fanaticism as the result of mistaking the negative moment of freedom—the ability to abstract from determinate content—for freedom as such. Although such abstraction is necessary for freedom, since without it we would be subject to the authority of the given, on its own it makes freedom impossible, by preventing us from positively determining ourselves to identify with specific things, people, and courses of action.

Hegel’s discussion in §5 of the *Philosophy of Right* proceeds to distinguish between theoretical and practical manifestations of such an absolute commitment to abstraction. Theoretical abstraction involves withdrawing from the concrete particularity of the world into the empty unity of the self. Hegel finds this “in the religious realm [in] the Hindu fanaticism of pure contemplation.”¹⁴ “The Hindus,” he continues, “place the highest value on mere persistence in the knowledge of one’s simple identity with oneself, on remaining within this empty space of one’s inwardness like colorless light in pure intuition, and on renouncing every activity of life, every end, and every representation. In this way one becomes *Brahman*.”¹⁵

Practical abstraction, by contrast, involves destroying the concrete particularity of the world. Merely transforming the world can never be

enough to satisfy the will that defines its freedom exclusively in negative terms, for each successive transformation results in yet another offensively concrete configuration. The absolute commitment to abstraction thus leads to “demolishing the whole existing social order, eliminating all individuals regarded as suspect by a given order, and annihilating any organization which attempts to rise up anew. [Such a negative will] may well believe that it wills some positive condition, for instance the condition of universal equality or of universal religious life, but it does not in fact will the positive actuality of this condition, for this at once gives rise to some kind of order, a particularization both of institutions and of individuals; but it is precisely through the annihilation of particularity . . . that the self-consciousness of this negative freedom arrives. . . . Thus . . . its actualization can only be the fury of destruction.”¹⁶ Hegel goes on to declare: “This appears . . . in the active fanaticism of both political and religious life. An example of this was the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution. . . . This was a time of trembling and quaking and of intolerance toward everything particular. . . . This is why the people, during the French Revolution, destroyed once more the institutions they had themselves created, because all institutions are incompatible with the abstract self-consciousness of equality.”¹⁷

In this passage, Hegel does not give an example of active fanaticism in religion, although his reference to the goal of “universal religious life” is suggestively reminiscent of his conception of Islam as the universal form of the religion of sublimity. This suggestion is made explicit in the 1824 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, where Hegel describes both the French Revolution and Islam as manifestations of a pure formalism that generates the commitment to abstraction that underlies fanaticism.¹⁸

The pure formalism underlying the French Revolution is subjective: the individual human subjects who carry out the actualization of freedom take it upon themselves to destroy whatever conflicts with their negative conception of liberty. Hegel elaborates on this shape of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In the transition to the section on Self-Alienated Spirit he writes: “what counts as absolute, essential being is self-consciousness as the sheer *empty unit* of the person. . . . This self is a mere laying waste of everything.”¹⁹ By the time this section culminates in Absolute Freedom and Terror: “The sole object that will still exist . . . is the freedom and individuality of the actual self-consciousness itself . . . an object that no longer has any content, possession, existence

or outer extension, but is merely this knowledge of itself as an absolutely pure and free individual self.”²⁰ This leads to the shape of consciousness discussed in the section on Morality, or Spirit that is certain of itself, in which the individual locates the absolute authority to determine right and wrong in his own conviction. The resulting self-worship and capacity for evil are the same described by Hegel at the conclusion of the account of morality in the *Philosophy of Right*.

Conversely, the pure formalism underlying Islam is objective: the religious adherents submit themselves entirely to the worship of God, and take it upon themselves to destroy whatever conflicts with their conception of his will. In his most extensive discussion of Islam, which takes place in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel writes: “The worship of the One is the only final aim of [Islam], and subjectivity has this worship for the sole occupation of its activity, combined with the design to subjugate secular existence to the One. . . . Because subjectivity suffers itself to be absorbed in the object, this One is deprived of every concrete predicate; so that neither does subjectivity become on its part spiritually free, nor on the other hand is the object of veneration concrete. But [Islam] is not the Hindu, monastic immersion in the absolute. Subjectivity is here living and unlimited—an energy which enters into secular life with a purely negative purpose, and busies itself and interferes with the world, only in such a way as shall promote the pure adoration of the One.”²¹

This mode of being that Hegel attributes to Islam is a direct result of its combining the sublime conception of God with the goal of a universal religious community. In his account of the religion of sublimity, Hegel explains that in the conception of God shared by Judaism and Islam: “No determinacy that . . . appears as finite is treated as holy; God is inwardly undetermined, infinite power, Lord; there is no *tertium quid*, no determinate being, in which [worshippers and God] might find themselves together. . . . The absolute is simply and solely a beyond for self-consciousness.”²² Here the sublime conception of God is implicitly distinguished from the Christian conception, in which God is to be found within, rather than purely apart from, the world of finite things. By contrast, Hegel remarks at the outset of the logic of essence in the *Encyclopedia*: “in the Jewish and . . . the [Islamic] religions . . . God was interpreted as the Lord and essentially *only* as the Lord. The defect of these religions consists generally in their not giving the finite its due.”²³

Although Judaism shares the sublime conception of God with Islam, the restriction of its religious community to a particular people prevents it from the universalized abstraction that Hegel sees as the source of fanaticism. As Winfield puts it, “the particularism of Judaism becomes its saving grace. Because Judaism, like Hinduism, has no aspirations of proselytization, religious empire is never sought.”²⁴ By contrast, Winfield writes: “Because Islam, unlike Judaism, does not restrict its message to a chosen people, but regards the worldwide spread of the prophet’s teachings as a religious imperative, Islamists have very global aspirations. . . . These aspirations are reflected in the recurring Islamist demands to make Islamic law supreme and exclusive, to liquidate any cultural dissidence that questions the authority of Islam, to destroy non-Muslim culture, both contemporary and historical, and to ban proselytization by other religions.”²⁵ Winfield reiterates Hegel’s basic diagnosis: “The abstract character of Muslim devotion becomes the progenitor of a world-embracing fanaticism. With the disembodied, purified will of the one Lord the absolute object of a devotion that grants no worldly differences any independent significance, Muslim fervor strives to surmount all frontiers in an all-inclusive empire of faith, in which no pre-existing conventions have any intrinsic value.”²⁶

It is important to note that Hegel recognizes and praises a genuinely liberating aspect of the universal character of Islam, which he sees as analogous to the liberating aspect of the French Revolution. Because Islam does not restrict itself to a particular group, but rather regards all human beings as equally subject to God’s law, it undermines numerous traditional hierarchies that have no rational justification. Hegel writes: “the leading features of [Islam] involve this . . . all limits, all national and caste distinctions vanish; no particular race, or political claim of birth is regarded—only man as *believer*.”²⁷ That Hegel approves of this development is clear: “[Islam] was . . . capable of the greatest elevation—an elevation free from all petty interests, and united with all the virtues that appertain to magnanimity and valor.”²⁸

But Hegel’s approval is limited, because although Islam liberates people from existing human hierarchies, he thinks it does so only to subject them to the will of God, and thus fails to respect or secure their freedom (just as the French Revolution ultimately failed to respect or secure human freedom). As a form of the religion of sublimity, Islam conceives God as transcending the finite world, rather than being immanent to it, and thus as issuing commands that are external to the human will while, at the same time, binding it absolutely. On this conception, Hegel

contends, “self-consciousness . . . [is] an empty, formal self-consciousness, not inwardly determined. All real . . . determining lies in an alien power.”²⁹ Consequently, he continues, “in any religion, such as Judaism or Islam, where God is comprehended only under the abstract category of the One, this human lack of freedom is the real basis, and humanity’s relationship to God takes the form of a heavy yoke, of onerous service.”³⁰

For the Islamic believer, then, “fear of the Lord is the absolute religious duty, to regard myself as nothing, to know myself only as absolutely dependent—the consciousness of the servant vis-à-vis the master; it is this fear that gives me absolute justification in my reestablishment.”³¹ Ironically, the pinnacle of such self-reestablishment proves to be self-annihilation, through which the believer demonstrates that her devotion to the Lord is truly unlimited. “The highest merit,” Hegel remarks, “is to die for the faith. He who perishes in battle is sure of paradise.”³² This conclusion concerning the ultimate expression of Islamic faith establishes yet one more link between the religion and the fanatical pursuit of absolute abstraction that Hegel ascribes to the French Revolution. For in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Right* he warns that it is the ability and willingness to renounce all particularity—which he regards as the definitive characteristic of both the political revolutionaries and the religious believers—that lies at the root of the human capacity to commit suicide.³³

We now have the answer to our second question: Hegel holds the universalized religion of sublimity to be essentially fanatical because its logical structure, like that of the French Revolution, commits it to an absolute abstraction that can tolerate no particularity. The universal scope and limitless depth of this intolerance is the source of indiscriminate and even suicidal destruction, which in turn gives rise to widespread terror, the affective correlate of the knowledge that violence could strike anywhere at any time, without warning or reason. Only our third and final question remains: What insights can Hegel offer regarding the overcoming of fanaticism?

3. Overcoming Fanaticism

The solution to almost all problems raised by Hegel is a better conception of freedom, and this problem is no exception. The absolute abstraction that fuels fanaticism is itself a product of the belief that self-determination is incompatible with the existence of given particularity. In the case of the French Revolution, the existence of traditional authorities,

institutions, and practices was deemed to violate the right of human beings to freely determine the character of their own lives. In the case of Islam, the existence of secular authorities, institutions, and practices is deemed to violate the right of God to freely determine the character of his creation, including the character of human life. In both cases, the operative conception of freedom assumes that a subject can be free only if it is independent from, and ultimately has control over, those things to which it stands in relation. Such a subject is conceived as a substance, the essence of which governs all of its actions and interactions, and thus reduces all that it encounters to the merely accidental. The problem with this conception is not only that the accidents are dominated in a way that precludes their freedom, but also that the substance itself fails to enjoy true self-determination, since it is perpetually confronted by external and alien particulars that command its attention and response.

In both politics and religion, then, freedom requires a shift from the logic of essence to the logic of the concept. Humans can find freedom neither by imposing their wills upon the existing configuration of the world (treating it as an accident to be determined by their own substance), nor by submitting to the imposition of the will of God (treating themselves as accidents to be determined by the substance of the Lord). Instead, freedom requires reconceiving the relationship between self and other, such that the two are seen to be identical-in-their-differences, and thus are able to achieve reconciliation as moments of a larger, concrete unity, within which their individual identities are reciprocally constituted.

This basic logical move can be seen as the common solution to the multiplicity of problems that we have considered in our whirlwind tour of various parts of Hegel's system. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Absolute Freedom and Terror leads to moral consciousness, which leads to evil, which can be overcome only when individuals renounce their insistence on the absolute right of conscience in favor of a communal determination of the truth that Hegel deems religious. In the *Philosophy of Right*, this same dynamic drives the development from morality (the ultimate stage of which is the ironic will that has arrogated to itself absolute authority over the determination of right and wrong) to ethical life (in which the individual finds itself and its freedom in the communities it forges with others). And, in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, the religions of sublimity—Judaism and Islam—in which God is conceived to transcend and govern creation, ultimately lead to the religion of the concept—Christianity—in which God is conceived to be immanent in human beings, who are therefore capable of self-determination.

In the political realm, this logical transformation enables us to avoid the fanatical calls for negative liberty that led to the terror in France, without reverting to the pre-revolutionary conservatism that sanctions whichever authorities and institutions history happens to have bequeathed. Instead, individuals can support and sustain particular institutions to the extent that these truly actualize their freedom, while reacting against and striving to reform those that are contrary to self-determination.

In the religious realm, the shift from essence to concept enables us to avoid the fanatical call to submit ourselves to the will of God, which Hegel attributes to Islam, without having to conclude that religion as such is incompatible with modernity and freedom. Instead, modern individuals can affirm religious doctrine and engage in religious practice, to the extent that such doctrine and practice reflect and reinforce the truth of human self-determination. When the doctrine and practice of a particular religion prove to be at odds with human freedom, as Hegel claims to be the case with Islam, individual believers can either work to reform their tradition from within (after the fashion of Protestant Christianity) or convert to a more fully modern alternative. As Richard Winfield correctly insists, “to accord with modernity, religion must represent the divine in such a way that individuals’ true relation to divinity entails recognition of the exclusive normativity of freedom.”³⁴ The extent to which contemporary strains of Islam, Judaism, or Christianity meet this standard is an empirical question, and thus cannot be determined *a priori* from within Hegel’s analysis of the logical space of religious possibilities, but Hegel has clearly shown us that a great deal hangs on the answer.

Notes

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983–1985), III, 173/243. Hereafter cited as *R*.

2. *TW* 12, 431/358.

3. This brief account of Hegel’s concept of religion draws upon my earlier article (Dudley, 2006).

4. *R* I, 272/374.

5. *R* III, 242 n. 210.

6. *TW* 12, 431–434/358–360.

7. Winfield, 2007, 52 n. 19.

8. *R* II, 45/139.

9. *TW* 12, 429/356.

10. *R* II, 35–36/129, 62/156.
11. *R* II, 64/158.
12. Winfield, 2007, 95.
13. *TW* 12, 431/358.
14. *Rph* §5 *R*.
15. *Rph* §5 *A*.
16. *Rph* §5 *R*.
17. *Rph* §5 *A*.
18. *R* III, 149/218, 170ff./241ff.
19. *TW* 3, §482.
20. *TW* 3, §590.
21. *TW* 12, 429/356–357.
22. *R* II, 59/153.
23. *Enc.* §112 *A*.
24. Winfield, 2007, 100.
25. Winfield, 2007, 3, 104.
26. Winfield, 2007, 102.
27. *TW* 12, 430/357.
28. *TW* 12, 431/358.
29. *R* II, 60/153.
30. *R* II, 62/156.
31. *R* II, 61/155.
32. *TW* 12, 430/357.
33. *Rph* §5 *A*.
34. Winfield, 2007, 43.

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The Inseparability of Love and Anguish

*Hegel's Theological Critique of Modernity*¹

Robert R. Williams

1. Introduction

Hegel's concept of reconciliation is often misunderstood; it is frequently assumed that his view of reconciliation is a conflict-free harmony that excludes tragedy and vice versa. Otto Pöggeler believes that reconciliation and tragedy are mutually exclusive, and that tragedy signifies the non-arrival of reconciliation.² Martha Nussbaum charges that reconciliation for Hegel signifies a conflict-free harmony; reconciliation and conflict are mutually exclusive.³ Dennis Schmidt notes Hegel's belief that the wounds of spirit heal and leave behind no scars; he attributes to Hegel a soteriological conviction that suffering finally comes to an end, and consequently wonders whether Hegel gets the point of tragedy.⁴

These views are misinterpretations of what Hegel means by reconciliation. Hegel's critics assume that reconciliation consists in a closure or harmony from which any serious opposition, conflict, or suffering are absent. Several recent studies challenge these reductive views of Hegel's concept of reconciliation.⁵ Michael Hardimon writes, "Hegel does not conceive of reconciliation as a state of perfect harmony, a circumstance in which no conflicts whatsoever remain. . . . Conflict and antagonism are internal to Hegel's conception of reconciliation."⁶ This is correct. Unfortunately Hardimon restricts his examination of the topic to social reconciliation and does not address or engage Hegel's views of tragedy, his philosophy of absolute spirit, or philosophy of religion and true infinite. We shall come back to these points later.

In this essay I shall argue that Hegel conceives reconciliation as qualified by tragedy, and tragedy is qualified by the concept of reconciliation. Reconciliation, far from excluding opposition, tragic conflict, and anguish, includes these. Reconciliation is compatible with and presupposes the tragic conflict and opposition it reconciles, so that reconciliation makes no sense and cannot be understood apart from its prior conditions. In what follows, I shall first discuss aspects of Hegel's incorporation of the tragic tradition in his treatment of the death of God, and his claim that ancient Christianity incorporated and transformed the death of God theme in its theology of the cross. For Hegel, the death of God not only reflects and incorporates the tragic tradition, it is a crucial part of the meaning of reconciliation. There can be no reconciliation without prior disunion and disruption and the most agonizing 'disruption' is the death of God. The reconciliation that comes as a gift of divine love expresses both divine love and divine anguish. To be sure, reconciliation is not simply anguish and suffering, but it includes these.

Hegel's treatment of the death of God has implications not only for reconciliation, but also for politics and political economy. Hegel insists that love and anguish cannot be separated and criticizes Enlightenment modes of thought for failing to understand or appreciate this inseparability. As a result, Enlightenment modes of thought, in Hegel's view, separate love and anguish. This separation has implications for political economy, poverty, and the poor. Hegel sees that Enlightenment and modernity tend to create conditions in which love is separated from anguish—becoming pure enjoyment—while marginalizing and abandoning those whose lives are wretchedness and anguish. The latter themes will be addressed in the last section of the essay.

2. The Suppression of Otherness and Tragedy in Traditional Philosophy and Theology

According to Hegel, tragic conflicts are conflicts between substantial interests of freedom, including the substantial institutions of ethical life, for example, family and state. Tragic conflicts are not conflicts between right and wrong, but between right and right, between freedom and freedom, between substantial powers that are compatible in principle and that exist in fragile equilibrium. Thus conflict between these essential ethical powers disrupts their equilibrium and brings human beings into inner and substantial contradiction with each other and with themselves. Tragic conflicts come about when individuals identify one ethical power, for example, family or state, fix it in isolation from the rest, and act upon it in an exclusive, one-sided way. Such a one-sided action destroys the tension and equilibrium constitutive of ethical life.

Hegel incorporates and deepens the tragic tradition in his treatment of the death of God as a central theme of Christian theology. Beginning with his *Early Theological Writings*, Hegel thinks Christianity in tragic forms of thought. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the expression “death of God” is the utterance of the unhappy consciousness that articulates the loss of everything substantial in the era of the Roman Empire. As an explicitly theological assertion, the term “death of God” reflects the Christian appropriation and transformation of the unhappy consciousness. This assertion is christological; as such it implies divine self-divestment and servanthood. God for Hegel is not lifeless and solitary (*leblose Einsame*),⁷ but freely chooses relation—God opts for relation, for vulnerability and the suffering it may bring. This implies that God is reciprocally related to and can be influenced by the world and that there is negativity and suffering in God. The compassionate self-sacrificing divine love constitutes the fundamental speculative intuition of Hegel’s thought.⁸ In light of this Hegel criticizes and reconstructs traditional philosophy and theology.

Hegel criticizes the monarchical metaphor for God and divine-world rule dominant in the metaphysical and theological tradition. This metaphor has a juridical and moral character: God the world-monarch issues commands to his subjects, and in judgment metes out rewards and punishments. The monarchical metaphor constitutes the relation between divine and human as creditor/debtor, or as master to servant. God the cosmic monarch is without serious opposition. This implies a view of the absolute as abstract, immutable, impassible substance, that is, as lord and master.

Further, in classical theology, reconciliation is conceived as a conflict-free harmony absent serious opposition. Hegel finds such a view embodied in Dante's *Divine Comedy*: "Dante's *Divine Comedy* is without fate and without a genuine struggle, because absolute confidence and assurance of the reality of the Absolute exist in it without opposition, and whatever opposition brings movement into this perfect security and calm is merely opposition without seriousness or inner truth."⁹ Hegel criticizes classical theology and metaphysics in part because it has no serious conception of otherness and difference. Conversely, if and when serious otherness and difference are acknowledged, then theology is faced with a host of issues: the other, relation, and the possibility of tragic opposition. In rejecting the classical Christian *Divine Comedy*, Hegel claims that "The absolute relation . . . is set forth in tragedy."¹⁰

The one who has seen Hegel's tragic absolute most clearly is Iwan Iljin. Iljin's thesis is that when Hegel confronted the issues of serious otherness and difference, he found that logical pantheism and panlogism were shipwrecked, and that the abstract rational absolute was displaced by a tragic, suffering God. Iljin believes Hegel's God struggles *against* the world as chaos and *for* the world as cosmos.¹¹ God struggles against evil as a nonconforming otherness and chaos. To the extent that God succeeds in that struggle, the result is what Iljin calls divine actuality in the world. While God remains free despite such struggle, this freedom is paid for with eternal anguish, and this is God's tragedy. Through God's tragic suffering evil is restrained and transformed eternally.¹²

Iljin has seen something important in Hegel. His thesis that Hegel's God is engaged in tragic struggle is generally on target. Iljin sees that Hegel's God presents tragic aspects, yet he fails to comprehend what Hegel is up to theologically, and rejects tragic theology: "*the suffering absolute is not absolute and the divinity which is engaged in infinite struggle is not God.*"¹³ Iljin rejects Hegel's revision of theology and clings to the orthodox impassible divine.

Hegel does embrace tragedy; he never abandoned his critique of the traditional theological absolute and concept of the kingdom of God. His intent is not to reject theology but rather to reconstruct it with what he regards as a more appropriate conception that includes serious otherness, negation, and a social-intersubjective concept of divine spirit in its community. Hegel draws upon tragedy to establish two important points of his own system and doctrine: (1) to dissolve the moral and legal-penal vision of the world, and (2) to affirm that the true infinite

includes serious opposition, without however simply succumbing to such opposition.¹⁴ These claims are present in his earliest writings; he criticizes traditional concepts of divine kingship and the kingdom of God. The traditional language of *kingdom* embodies both the monarchial metaphor and heteronomy; a kingdom is “only a union through domination, the power of a stranger over a stranger.”¹⁵ Hegel finds far more attractive a concept of religion as a community united through love, a living bond that affirms difference while overcoming enmities and hostilities.

Further, it must be noted that while Hegel acknowledges tragedy, he rejects tragic theology, that is, that theology which Paul Ricoeur has called unavowable, because of its demonic, jealous divine. Hegel appreciates that Kant’s attack on the theological proofs renews the tragic theology of the unknown God. Hegel, *pace* Pöggeler,¹⁶ *did* understand tragic theology and rejected it just as he rejected Kant’s negative conclusions on the proofs: “The old conception of Nemesis, according to which the divine and its activity in the world were conceived by the abstract understanding only as a leveling power destroying everything noble and great, was opposed by Plato and Aristotle with the claim that God is not jealous. The same answer may be given to the modern assertions that humans cannot know God.”¹⁷

To summarize, Hegel criticizes the monarchial metaphor, the moral God and moral vision of the world, the *Divine Comedy*, and seeks to appropriate aspects of the tragic tradition. But this appropriation of the tragic does not include tragic theology. For Hegel God is not jealous, but rather self-communicating, and self-divesting love. Hegel’s account of divine self-emptying or kenosis, asserts that God assumes human form, the form of a servant, obedient to death. Divine kenosis culminates in the death of God—the christological thesis. The union of God with death in the anguish of infinite love—God breaks God’s heart—constitutes for Hegel the fundamental speculative intuition. God suffers not because God is finite, or because God has to overcome an abysmal element and dark side, but because God is love and cannot remain indifferent to God’s other.

3. The Death of God and Divine Suffering

Within the *Phenomenology*, the death of God defines both a cultural situation expressed by the unhappy consciousness, and a central but suppressed

theme of Christian theology, to wit, divine suffering. Hegel believes that the ancient theology of the cross is a theological interpretation of the death of God and atheism, which on the one hand acknowledges the loss of everything substantial, and on the other hand, transforms the cross and the crucified God into expressions of hope.

First, let's consider the death of God as the utterance of the unhappy consciousness. In *Phenomenology of Spirit* §752, Hegel refers to the unhappy consciousness as the successor to the comic consciousness that makes the gods into objects of satire and comedy. The unhappy consciousness is the tragic fate of all self-certainty that aims to be absolute. Everything is grasped as relative to and dissolvable by consciousness. Satire dissolves the gods as ethical substance, and ethical substance itself. Satire also destroys Greek tragedy, because tragedy presupposes a seriousness about ethical substance, for example, Antigone's pathos is the family and family ties. In contrast the unhappy consciousness is post-tragic: The gods—the ethical powers—(*die sittliche Mächte*)¹⁸ are dead. In such a situation the tragic conflict of right against right is no longer possible. Everything substantial has been lost—a deeper loss than that portrayed in classical tragic conflicts.

Second, Hegel interprets the death of God expressed by the unhappy consciousness through the theology of the cross and divine kenosis or self-divestment. The death of God involves a double divestment or kenosis. This double divestment includes the death of the mediator and the death of abstract immutable substance that is devoid of self:

the death of the mediator . . . is the supercession of his objective existence . . . his particular being-for-self. . . [It] is the death not only of his natural aspect, or of his particular being-for-self . . . but also of the *abstraction* of the divine being. . . the death of this representation contains at the same time the death of the abstraction of the divine being, which is not yet posited as a self. This death is the anguished feeling of the unhappy consciousness that *God godself is dead*. . . This feeling is thus in fact the loss of substance and of its standing over against consciousness; but at the same time it is the pure *subjectivity* of substance, or the pure certainty of itself which it lacked when it was object . . . or pure essence. This knowledge is thus the spiritualization whereby substance becomes

subject, by which its abstraction and lifelessness have expired, and substance has thereby become actual, simple and universal self-consciousness.¹⁹

What dies, or is divested, is the mediator. In Hegel's account, the mediator or god-man is an actual individual, not a mythic figure; religious "consciousness does not start with its own inner life . . . and unite within itself the thought of god with existence. On the contrary, it starts from an existence that is immediately present and recognizes God therein. . . . This incarnation of the divine being . . . is the simple content of the absolute religion."²⁰

Second, what dies is the abstraction of the divine being that is devoid of self or subject. God is not the abstract immutable of the unhappy consciousness. For Hegel, God's self-divestment means that God freely renounces abstract, exclusive *fürsichsein* and enters into relation and community. Hegel departs from the traditional monarchial metaphor and the impassible divine that exclude divine community and suffering. In an early aphorism he wrote: "God sacrifices himself, gives himself up to destruction. God himself is dead; the highest despair of complete forsakenness by God."²¹ In this expression of total loss, of God-forsakenness, Hegelian theology recapitulates, deepens, and spiritualizes the tragic tradition and its successor, the unhappy consciousness: "This death [of the abstraction of the divine being which is not posited as a self] is the painful feeling of the unhappy consciousness that God himself is dead."²²

According to Hegel, the negation/dissolution of substance is the return of consciousness into the pit of the I = I, the night. In this pit, all determinations are dissolved, including substance. But what dissolves substance is the subject as negativity: In that dissolution, the subject discovers itself, and this is the transition from substance to subject.

Commenting on this difficult passage, Cyril O'Regan believes that Hegel refuses what he calls traditional theism's "fetishism of presence" (in our terms: Dante's *Divine Comedy* where the absolute exists without serious opposition) and atheism's fetishism of absence (sheer absence, the absolutization of difference, otherness). He thinks that with the assertion "death of God" Hegel endorses a restricted, non-fetishist atheism. According to O'Regan, for Hegel the death of God signifies an absence that is an occluded presence, a presence in contradiction. Hence contrary to any purely atheistic or a-theological proposal, the death of God for

Hegel is always an implied or implicit presence of the divine.²³ I take this to mean that Hegel takes the death of God asserted by the unhappy consciousness to be acknowledged and incorporated within the theology of the cross.

This implies that the death of God is not final, but a moment within a transition wherein the power of being overcomes non-being. This is the ontological condition of reconciliation. The absence of God has the character of a transition. It is the absence of a divine presence not yet fully arrived, and a particular presence that has already been left behind. This “between” is developed in the *Phenomenology* as the night of the I = I, a latent presence. As O'Regan notes, this presence is neither theistic nor transcendent, but *an undisclosed form which subverts and corrects* a presence of deficiency, or a deficiency of presence, if presence is rightly, non-fetishistically understood.²⁴

According to the *Phenomenology*, the anguish of natural death is the moment in which substance becomes subject.²⁵ It is the moment in which spirit comes to itself, finds itself, perishes to the natural, and out of the pit in which all natural limits are dissolved, it takes only its own determinations—including its being and all that has worth and validity for it.²⁶ Spirit finds itself as spirit, spirit remains spirit, and spirit becomes spirit in this negation of negation.²⁷ All this is condensed into an important image: “the life of spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it.”²⁸ Spirit maintains itself in otherness, that is, it endures its dismemberment in infinite grief and anguish.²⁹ Hegel proposes a fundamental modification of the theological tradition, namely, that there are negation and suffering in God. Hegel affirms the theopassianism that the ontotheological tradition rejected.

There is an important connection, emphasized by Jüngel, between absolute freedom and absolute suffering (*Leiden*): “The idea of absolute freedom and absolute suffering are linked together here because God gives himself up to destruction, and thus chooses suffering in absolute freedom.”³⁰ The death of God is God's self-sacrifice and self-negation. What “dies,” that is, what God renounces and divests, is precisely exclusive *fürsichsein*, relationless abstract substance, the impassible divine being. If the divine were abstract impassible substance, or fate, then no finding of self in other, and no reconciliation would be possible.

The death of God that Hegel endorses is the “between” between atheism and theism. Hegel maintains that atheism can be reconciled with

theology, and takes Christianity's theology of the cross, rightly interpreted, to be the historical accomplishment of such a reconciliation. The only possible basis for theology to include atheism within itself is that it be able to acknowledge and recognize atheism as one of its own themes and assertions. To acknowledge atheism as its own theme does not mean that theology simply becomes atheism. Rather Hegel speaks about the idea *incorporating the infinite grief of the finite within itself, as a moment but no more than a moment*.³¹ This incorporation of the death of God is the philosophical context of Hegel's call for a speculative Good Friday to replace the historical Good Friday. Hegel's proposal takes the infinite grief of the death of God as a negative moment within and co-constitutive of theology. The death of God is a negative moment and transition within a speculative theology that negates the negation (atheism) and sublates atheism in theology as its own theological affirmation. The result is not no absolute, but a suffering absolute.

In the Berlin *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel integrates the christological dimension of the death of God systematically with the doctrine of immanent, ontological distinctions in God, or, triunity. The triune structure of God articulates that God remains God in total otherness, negation, self-divestment, suffering, and death. Triunity is the key to Hegel's reconciliation of atheism with theology. In theological atheism, atheism is a moment, but no more than a moment in absolute spirit. It is the absolute's own self-specification.

Hegel points out that while the themes of incarnation, death, and rebirth of God are not unique to Christian faith,³² the Christian religion gives the most radical expression to these themes. He cites a Lutheran hymn which expresses "an awareness that the human, the finite, the fragile, the weak the negative, are themselves a moment of the divine, that they are within God himself, that finitude, negativity, otherness are not outside of God and do not, as otherness, hinder unity with God. Otherness, the negative, is known to be a moment of the divine nature itself. This involves the highest idea of spirit."³³ The philosophical significance of incarnation is the divine union with other being. This means that there is finitude and determinacy in God. The pinnacle of finitude and negation is death, the anguish of death.³⁴ The death of the mediator, the god-man, is the extreme divine self-divestment, God's sharing in finitude to the point of its ceasing to be. This self-divestment to the point of death is also a manifestation of love: "For love consists in giving up one's personality, all that is one's own. . . . It is . . . the supreme surrender of oneself in the

other, even in this most extrinsic other being of death. . . . The death of Christ is the vision of this love itself. . . . The monstrous unification of these absolute extremes is love itself—*this is the speculative intuition*.”³⁵

The union of God with death is only the beginning of reconciliation. It is the first moment of negation, the irretrievable loss of God-forsakenness and absence. But this loss is not the whole story. To complete the picture Hegel appropriates the Lutheran interpretation of the death of Christ as the death of death (*mors mortis*).³⁶ This concept of the death of death as a negation of negation is already present in Lutheran theology. Thus in the death of God there is not only tragedy and loss, but also a tremendous reversal:

God has died, God is dead—this is the most frightful of all thoughts, that everything eternal and true is not, that negation itself is found in God. The deepest anguish, the feeling of complete irretrievability, the annulling of everything that is elevated, are bound up with this thought. However, the process does not come to a halt at this point; rather a reversal takes place: God that is to say, maintains himself in this process and the latter is only the death of death. . . . the death of Christ is the death of this death itself, the negation of negation.³⁷

Since God maintains godself in self-negation and self-divestment, the death of God is rather the death of death. This “death becomes the means of salvation, the focal point of reconciliation.”³⁸ The death of God theology of the cross is, Hegel maintains, essentially bound up with the concept of God as triunity: “The reconciliation in Christ . . . makes no sense if God is not known as the triune God, if it is not recognized that God is, but also is as the other, as self-distinguishing, so that this other is God himself . . . and the sublation of this difference, this otherness and the return of love, are the spirit.”³⁹

Triunity is necessary to conceive (1) that suffering and death are one moment, but no more than a moment in God’s being, and (2) that God remains God in self-emptying and self-divestment, even in union with death.⁴⁰ Triunity is necessary to conceive both the negation in God (death of God), and that God endures the negation and sublates it in transformation. God’s triune mode of being is in itself reconciliation and thus the objective ontological foundation of divine-human reconciliation.⁴¹ *Triunity forges a systematic connection between love and anguish in the concept of spirit and reconciliation.*

4. Appropriation of Reconciliation

The human appropriation is not the origin, much less the creation of reconciliation for the first time. "The presupposition in the cultus is that the reconciliation of God with humanity is implicitly and explicitly consummated, that it is not a matter of first having to bring this reconciliation about absolutely; instead it only needs to be produced for me. Participation in this reconciliation . . . is the action of the cultus."⁴²

Participation in the cultus is entrance into a sphere of infinite love inseparable from the anguish of God's death: "It involves knowing oneself as having within oneself as this individual, infinite worth, absolute freedom and the infinite power to maintain oneself in this other pure and simple."⁴³ Human dependence on the spirit of God mediates an infinite worth as the object of divine love and provides a supreme independence which is the death of everything worldly and immediate,⁴⁴ and which encourages a "rocklike stability"⁴⁵ in a being that is otherwise contingent and prone to self-disintegration. Such a founded and secured "subjectivity has given up all external distinctions in this infinite worth, distinctions of mastery, power, position, sex and wealth. *Before God all human beings are equal. . . . herein lies the possibility and root of truly universal justice and of the actualization of freedom.*"⁴⁶

Hegel observes that appropriation involves a participation in the contradictions at the heart of the cultus. Owing to the pattern of destruction and creation, the life of faith, and participation in the community of faith is not a triumphal *Divine Comedy* that excludes all serious opposition. On the contrary, the life of faith reflects and participates on its own level, in the struggle of the suffering God,⁴⁷ to wit, "the *spirit who dwells in his community, dies in it every day and is daily resurrected.*"⁴⁸ The cultus is a daily celebration of reconciliation in the shape of the theology of the cross, portrayed as an ongoing tragic conflict, to wit, the death of God (the loss of everything substantial) and of resurrection (a new beginning made possible by forgiveness).

This conflict structures Hegel's concept of reconciliation; Hegel's account of the Christian view of reconciliation owes much to his account of tragic resolution. Just as the death of God sums up and deepens the tragic tradition, so also tragic reconciliation illumines the grief present in the reconciliation at the heart of the Christian cultus. Hegel expresses this many-faceted reconciliation in the following formulation: it is a grievous, anguished reconciliation, *a disquieted, troubled bliss in adversity (eine unglückselige Seligkeit im Unglück).*⁴⁹ Hegel speaks of a reconciliation

that is anguished or painful (*schmerzliche*). Reconciliation includes a bliss (*Seligkeit*), but one which is troubled, disturbed, or disquieted. Reconciliation is therefore not a conflict-free harmony, but a disquieted or troubled bliss in adversity.

Michael Hardimon correctly points out that conflict and tension are internal to reconciliation: "Hegel's concept of reconciliation is . . . one that understands itself as preserving conflict at one level and overcoming it at another. Both elements are attractive. The fact that it seeks to preserve conflict is attractive because the idea of a perfect harmony is both utopian and dangerous: utopian because unrealizable, dangerous because invidiously anti-individualistic. The fact that Hegel is willing to embrace conflict makes his thought quite appealing. He is far too often placed in the camp of the enemies of conflict."⁵⁰

In support of his claim, Hardimon cites the famous passage from the *Philosophy of Right* in which reconciliation means recognizing "reason as the rose in the cross of the present."⁵¹ This famous declaration is often cited but seldom understood. The image of the cross of the present "is a metaphor for the suffering and wickedness that are an inevitable part of human life, the problematic features of social life and alienation."⁵² The cross of the present casts a shadow on the rationality of the actual and compels the recognition that the social world exhibits problems. As Hardimon explains, "Hegel would insist one cannot recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present (one cannot grasp the rationality of the modern social world) without also seeing the *cross* in which the rose is placed. And although finding reason . . . in the present is supposed to make it possible to delight in the present, the cross of the present, together with its attendant pain, remains. In Hegel's view, the delight that is internal to reconciliation must co-exist with full appreciation of the suffering for which the cross stands."⁵³

The irony is that Hardimon does not include within his discussion of Hegel's metaphor of the cross of the present, Hegel's own analysis of tragedy, his theology of the cross, his interpretation of modernity as the death of God, or the Golgotha of absolute spirit. Indeed, in Hardimon's reading, both tragedy and the unhappy consciousness, as well as dour Lutherans with their "God is dead" hymn are all conspicuously absent. Moreover, Hardimon displays no troubled bliss or disquieted peace; instead he informs us that in well-ordered modern society, no tragic conflicts between family and state can occur, and no members of a modern state will face the predicament of Antigone and Creon. Hardimon

combines a correct appreciation of Hegel's concept of reconciliation as the *rose* in the cross of the present, with a superficial grasp of the *cross of the present*. The only discordant note Hardimon finds in the Hegelian project of reconciliation to the modern social world is poverty, but even that is not too serious. He informs us that we moderns are able to accept the existence of poverty because "defects and imperfections are an ineliminable feature of the social world. This acceptance, Hegel contends, will inevitably contain a moment of melancholy. As well it should, for it is precisely this moment of melancholy that makes it possible, in his view, to combine full acceptance of the modern social world with clear-eyed recognition of its defects."⁵⁴ I question Hegel's alleged "full acceptance of the modern world."

But first I must point out that participation in the cultus of the god-man who dies daily and daily is resurrected does not exhibit the complacency reflected in Hardimon's statements, but rather may actually intensify suffering and anguish, and evoke demands for universal justice. In the cultus, human finitude receives "absolute value on its own account, being conscious that it is the absolute object of the infinite love of God."⁵⁵ Hegel asserts that this absolute value of personhood is not compatible with servitude. Since divine love dissolves all distinctions, it presents an infinite polemic against slavery and demands justice for all. Love's polemic means that conflict and suffering may actually be *intensified* by reconciliation because love is the foundation of a universal freedom and justice that can relate only polemically to inequality and forms of exploitation and domination, for example, slavery and coercion.

5. Hegel's Critique of Modernity: The Separation of Love from Anguish

In his 1821 lecture manuscript of the *Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel presents a theological-political critique of modernity unparalleled in his published writings. Hegel conceives the relation of Christianity toward its historical and cultural world as principally polemic. In his earlier writings, Hegel underscored Jesus's expression of contempt toward a desacralized and dispirited world.⁵⁶ In such a world, "all virtue and right, everything sacred in human institutions and affairs, the majesty of everything that has infinite value—all are cast upon the dung heap. . . . Everything ethical . . . was destroyed, and there remained to the established order only

an entirely bare, external cold authority—only death—from which the degraded . . . life that was inwardly aware of itself did not recoil.”⁵⁷

Jesus, who embodies divine-human unity, expresses contempt for such a dispirited world. This contempt provokes the reaction of that world against him by marginalizing him, that is, putting him to a degrading death on the cross as a common criminal.⁵⁸ The theology of the cross invokes, inverts, and revalues the dishonor of that crucifixion:

That which the state uses as an instrument of dishonor is here converted into what is highest. . . . What has counted for the lowest and most despised is now made the highest. We find here the direct expression of a complete revolution against all that is established and regarded as valuable. . . . The cross corresponds to our gallows. If this symbol of dishonor is made into a badge of honor and is raised up as a banner whose positive content is . . . the kingdom of God, then the inner disposition of the citizens in its deepest respects is withdrawn from the life of the state and from civil affairs. The substantial foundation of public life is removed, and this whole structure no longer has any actuality. Its inner reality is now only something external—an empty appearance which must come crashing down.⁵⁹

This polemical stance toward the world is rooted in the divine love that relativizes all external distinctions in its infinite valuation: “Before God all human beings are equal.”⁶⁰ According to Hegel, Christianity arises out of a rupture with the dispirited world, and for it finitude “has its infinite value only in the love that holds in infinite anguish and that comes from it.”⁶¹

Hegel believes that this polemical stance toward a dispirited world is both most needed and most threatened by modernity. It is needed because in Hegel’s view, modernity has a dark side that includes the death of God, a nihilism that threatens all substantial values and generates a situation of cultural fragmentation. It also includes problems of political inequality, for example, poverty.

The appreciation of God’s infinite love as a demand for universal justice is threatened by the restriction of cognition to finitude, which becomes an absolute barrier. “It is no longer a grief to our age that it knows nothing of God; rather it counts as the highest insight that this

cognition is not even possible.”⁶² The barrier of finitude relegates God to an empty beyond: “Unhappy the age that must content itself with being forever told only that there may be a God!”⁶³ Modernity thus produces the spurious infinity of endlessly reiterated dualism and negation, a condition that is the sadness of finitude.⁶⁴ Left to itself, finitude is confronted by the unhappy alternatives of endless yearning for the God it denies itself in cognition, and Enlightenment philosophies that fail to make sense of life (as the positing and resolving of contradictions), or of the anguish of enduring contradiction, and thus fail to comprehend spirit, love, community, and God.

An adequate response to this situation requires a speculative philosophy that “only recently has attained this conceptual depth.”⁶⁵ Hegel sharply contrasts the speculative philosophy which has its central speculative intuition in the death of God as “love in infinite anguish. . . the truth in and for itself,”⁶⁶ with “the unphilosophical shallowness that wants to philosophize—thinking, reasoning, enlightenment—[which] has nothing to say about this; similarly the contradiction the Enlightenment makes between love and suffering is . . . utterly spiritless.”⁶⁷ Hegel believes that since modernity is spiritless, it lacks metaphysical depth; it is unable to appreciate the union of love and anguish in the speculative intuition, and unable to hold them together. Instead, the Enlightenment separates love from anguish.

The separation of love from anguish is the theological-spiritual correlate of a dire situation in political economy, namely, the extremes of wealth and poverty which are generated in civil society, *when it functions as it is supposed to*. According to Hegel, civil society is the disintegration of ethical life, which becomes lost in the extremes of wealth and poverty: “civil society affords a *spectacle of extravagance and misery as well as of the physical and ethical corruption common to both*.”⁶⁸

The disintegration of ethical life is a crisis for modern civil society. The extremes of extravagant wealth and abject poverty not only delegitimize civil society, but threaten to tear it apart. These developments mark the return of the figure of master and slave within a world where slavery is supposedly abolished in principle. The extremes of wealth and poverty make clear that modernity has not abolished tragedy, but rather is only the most recent scene where freedom comes to tragic realization.

Hegel draws unflattering but important comparisons between his own civil society and the spiritual desert of the Roman Empire in which Christianity historically arose:

The Roman age was one when rationality necessarily took refuge solely in the form of private rights and private goods because the universal unity based on religion had disappeared, along with a universal political life. Ordinary people, helpless and inactive, with nothing to trust, left the universal alone and took care for themselves. It was an age in which that which subsists in and for itself was abandoned even in the realm of thought. Just as Pilate asked, "What is truth?" [John 18:38], similarly in our time the quest for private welfare and enjoyment is the order of the day. Moral insight, the basis of personal actions, opinions and convictions, is without objective truth. Truth is the opposite: I acknowledge only what I subjectively believe. *For some time the teaching of philosophers has corresponded to this view: we know and cognize nothing of God.*⁶⁹

This is the death of God. In such a dispirited milieu, nothing appears to possess intrinsic value and worth. There is a disappearance of a universal public life, or in Arendt's phrase, the loss of the public sphere as a free space of appearance.⁷⁰ Under the conditions of social disintegration and fragmentation, rationality takes refuge in the private sphere and becomes utilitarian. Fleeing from the universal, rationality is restricted to the pursuit of merely individual private rights, goods, and enjoyments. Such a truncated rationality, restricted to finitude and to the private sphere, knows nothing of God.

In such a cultural situation revolution seems to be both necessary and impossible. How can the revolutionary polemic of Christian faith against a dispirited world be sustained if the age declares God to be unknowable, separates love from anguish and turns love into mere enjoyment? These concerns are underscored by Hegel when he focuses on their impact on both religion and the poor: "Where the gospel is not preached to the poor, who are the ones closest to infinite anguish; *where the teaching of love in infinite anguish is abandoned in favor of enjoyment, love without anguish*; where the gospel is preached in a naturalistic way—there the salt has lost its savor."⁷¹

Under the conditions of boundless extravagance and wealth, love is separated from anguish and becomes sheer enjoyment, but only for the wealthy few. A dispirited age does not comprehend love in infinite anguish. It perceives suffering love as a pathology, and rejects it in favor of a love without anguish, that is, utilitarian enjoyments and satisfactions, consumer culture, and so forth.

On the other hand, anguish is separated from love: there is a deficit in compassion in which the poor are marginalized and left alone in their misery. Because the extremes of wealth and poverty undermine universal public life, the implicit claims of all to universal justice and equality are threatened by fragmentation.⁷² When life becomes little more than the pursuit of private rights, goods, and satisfactions, it becomes too easy for the poor, who are the closest to infinite anguish, to become invisible, even to the church which, Hegel notes, is supposed to preach the gospel to the poor:

The poor are for the most part deprived of the consolation of religion; they cannot visit church often because they have no suitable clothing or must work on Sundays. Further they must participate in a worship which is chiefly designed for an educated audience. In this connection, Christ said that the Gospel is preached for the poor. . . . Equally . . . justice is often made very difficult for them. Their medical care is usually very bad. Even if they receive treatment for actual illnesses, they lack the means necessary for the preservation and care of their health. . . . The poor man feels excluded and mocked by everyone and this necessarily gives rise to an inner indignation. He is conscious of himself as an infinite, free being, and thus arises the demand that his external existence should correspond with this consciousness [of infinite dignity and worth]. . . . Self-consciousness appears driven to the point where it no longer has any rights, where freedom has no existence. . . . Because the individual's freedom has no existence [in the world] the *recognition of universal freedom disappears*.⁷³

It is not only churches that betray their cause and mission. Modern civil societies and corresponding secular states may also succumb to social fragmentation and tribalism. When that happens, recognition of universal human dignity and freedom disappears. And when *that* happens, civil society is no longer legitimate on its own "civilized" terms. Rather it becomes an oppressive ruling faction.

Shlomo Avineri has claimed that the problem of poverty is unique in Hegel's thought because it appears to be an intractable problem arising from the inner logic of civil society itself, and for which there is apparently no solution.⁷⁴ If that is so, then the dialectic of civil society would clearly be tragic: civil society, which is supposed to be a system of

universal interdependence, fails, because it generates an other—the poor rabble—which it can neither assimilate nor disavow. Thus civil society is caught in a bad or spurious infinity, and this spurious infinite threatens to undermine human solidarity and universal justice and results in a return of the figure of master and slave. One response to this is to accept the problem as intractable, abandon the poor to their fate, and pursue one's own private interest—like Hegel accuses some of doing:

When the gospel is no longer preached to the poor, when the salt has lost its savor, and all the foundations have been tacitly removed, then the common people . . . are helpless. . . . They are nearest to the condition of infinite anguish, but since love has been perverted into a love and an enjoyment from which all anguish is absent, they find themselves abandoned by their teachers. The latter have to be sure, helped themselves by means of reflection and have found their satisfaction in finitude, in subjectivity and its virtuosity, i.e., in vanity, but the common people, who form the substantial nucleus of the population as a whole, cannot find satisfaction in such things.⁷⁵

On this issue of poverty and marginalization of the poor, Hegel apparently had moments of despair.⁷⁶ Alan Wood observes: “The problem of poverty in modern civil society plainly disturbed Hegel greatly, and led to thoughts which are not easily reconciled with his generally optimistic attitude toward the ethical prospects of modern civil society.”⁷⁷

Hegel's remark that poverty is a problem which “torments modern societies”⁷⁸ suggests that he is one of those so tormented, driven “from pillar to post.”⁷⁹ His 1819 *Lectures on Philosophy of Right* make this unmistakably clear. Hegel, as the philosopher and theologian of freedom and reconciliation, according to which divine-human separation is implicitly overcome, not only acknowledges, but calls attention to and refuses to let go of the fact that this inner reconciliation and liberation have not yet pervaded civil society and ethical life.

For Hegel reconciliation has political implications. Reconciliation is grounded in the inseparability of love and anguish. The infinite anguish of love constitutes the possibility, not only of reconciliation, but also of a truly universal justice and of the actualization of freedom.⁸⁰ For this reason Hegel cannot let go of the plight of the poor. The existence of poverty and a penurious rabble cannot be disavowed because it is civil

society—not God or nature—that is responsible for their plight. But neither can they be assimilated without contradicting the ethos of civil society and political economy, namely, economic independence and self-sufficiency. This contradiction demands a response from the state—an ethical institution that is supposed to be the bulwark against slavery.⁸¹ Hegel doubts that the secular state is up to this challenge, because it does not hold together love and anguish, or offer a plausible vision of universal human solidarity and justice. Morality, which is its highest category, may thematize freedom and responsibility so narrowly and privatistically that it tends to offer the poor only accusation and condemnation for their poverty: “When . . . the moral man is satisfied in his reflection and opinion, his conviction, in his finitude; when every foundation, security, the substantive bonds of the world have been tacitly removed; when we are left inwardly empty of objective truth . . . then one thing alone remains certain: finitude turned in upon itself, arrogant barrenness and lack of content, the extremity of self-satisfied dis-enlightenment.”⁸²

Hegel views the poor through the lens of infinite anguish. As those marginalized by civil society, the poor are nearest to the infinite anguish of the crucified God. The poor, who experience anguish separated from love, are perhaps the historical analogue of the God who identified with them to the point of death and who dies daily in the cultus. Hegel’s disquieted bliss makes him a critical, if not reluctant, modernist; he is certainly not an unqualified apologist for “progress” and Enlightenment optimism.

Poverty is a tragic dissonance that resonates for Hegel precisely because he believes that reconciliation entails the inseparability of love and anguish. This inseparability rules out the false view of reconciliation that many attribute to him. Since love and anguish are inseparable, anguish is a constitutive feature of divine-human relation and reconciliation. Spirit is able to endure such anguish and see in it hope, promise, and the beginning of reconciliation: “The suffering of the soul, this infinite anguish, is the witness of the spirit. . . . Spirit is the absolute power to endure this anguish. . . . Thus *anguish verifies the appearance of God*.”⁸³ This is not a tragic anguish at the destruction of a tragic hero, but rather a blessed rage for order despite the perpetuation of injustice and domination. For the latter have been overcome in principle in the divine love that finds infinite worth in every human being.

In conclusion, the connection Hegel discerns between the infinite anguish of the suffering love of God, and the infinite anguish of the

poor calls into question the traditional interpretations of “the conservative theological Hegel” and “the atheistic liberationist Hegel.” Both the Left Hegelians and the Right Hegelians missed the connection between theology and tragedy on the one hand, and the tragic contradiction of civil society that poverty represents on the other, because neither camp took seriously his philosophy of tragic freedom and his theology of a suffering God. On the contrary, Hegel is a philosopher of freedom, reconciliation, and liberation, not in spite of his theology but because of it.

Notes

1. An expanded version of this chapter is to be found in Williams, 2012, chap. 10.

2. Pöggeler, 1973.

3. Nussbaum, 1986.

4. Schmidt, 2001.

5. Hardimon, 1994; Speight, 2001.

6. Hardimon, 1994, 92–93.

7. Hegel, 1979, §808; *TW* 3.

8. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 125.

9. Hegel, 1975b, 105–106.

10. Hegel, 1975b, 108.

11. Iljin, 1946, 11.

12. Iljin, 1946, 379.

13. Iljin, 1946, 382 (emphasis in original).

14. Both the moral God and the juridical God of punishments are for Hegel finite conceptions, tied to opposition, versions of the false or leveled infinite, forms of traditional metaphysical ontotheology. Hegel’s critique of metaphysics as the first attitude of thought toward objectivity that takes everything to be an entity, and God as a “large entity,” includes a critique of ontotheology.

15. Hegel, 1948, 278.

16. “It never occurred to Hegel—as it did to Nietzsche—to press behind the philosophical tradition to a tragic world-view” (Pöggeler, 1973, 102). For Hegel’s oft-reiterated rejection of tragic theology, see his foreword to *Hinrichs Religionsphilosophie*; see also Hegel, 2007, 64–68.

17. *Enc.* §564. This assertion shows no change in Hegel’s early reappraisal of Christianity, to wit, that he regards it not only as a religion of reconciliation but also as the consummate religion. Crites notes that Hegel earlier had proposed a new religion to replace the positive forms of Protestantism and Catholicism. But from 1805–1806 on, Hegel stops calling for a new religion, reconstructs

Christianity as a religion of freedom, and articulates no religious development beyond it. See Crites, 1998, 231–242.

18. See *Rph* §§142–156.

19. Hegel, 1979, §785.

20. *PbS* §§758–759.

21. Cited in Jüngel, 1983, 74.

22. Hegel, 1979, §785.

23. O'Regan, 1994, 199.

24. O'Regan, 1994, 200.

25. Hegel, 1979, §785.

26. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 126.

27. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 125.

28. Hegel, 1979, §32.

29. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 124.

30. Jüngel, 1983, 74.

31. Hegel, 1977, 190.

32. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 2: 622–623.

33. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 326.

34. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 124–125.

35. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 125 (my emphasis). This last sentence demonstrates the close connection in Hegel's view between speculative philosophy and the fundamental claims of Christian theology concerning reconciliation. The union of divine love and death constitutes the fundamental speculative intuition of the system.

36. Jüngel, 1983, 93. Jüngel comments, "It is fascinating to see in Hegel's exposition how Luther's . . . insights are made hermeneutically fruitful" (Jüngel, 1983, 92).

37. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 323–324. In his 1821 lecture manuscript Hegel writes: "But in this negation and self-divestment God still remains God" (Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 124),

38. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 325.

39. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 327.

40. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 124.

41. According to Jüngel, "Hegel's Philosophy of Religion represents . . . a high water mark of the first order in the history of theology in that here the theology of the cross and the doctrine of the trinity mutually support and establish each other" (Jüngel, 1983, 94).

42. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 1: 443.

43. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 135.

44. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 137.

45. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 136.

46. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 1: 138 (my emphasis).

47. For Hegel this participation involves spectators who are also participants, namely, the Greek tragic chorus (Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 224).

48. *PbS* §784; *PbG* 545.

49. Hegel, 1975a, 2: 1231–1232; *TW* 15, 566–567 (my emphasis).

50. Hardimon, 1994, 94. Those who think that reconciliation excludes conflict include Martha Nussbaum, Bernard Williams, Otto Pöggeler, and Dennis Schmidt.

51. Hegel, 1991b, 22.

52. Hardimon, 1994, 90.

53. Hardimon, 1994, 90.

54. Hardimon, 1994, 250.

55. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 1: 352.

56. See Crites, 1998, 234.

57. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 130–131.

58. See Nietzsche: “in truth there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross” (Nietzsche, 1954, 612).

59. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 130.

60. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 138.

61. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 137.

62. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 1: 87.

63. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 1: 444 n. 175.

64. Hegel, 1969, 129–130.

65. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 1: 143.

66. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 1: 143.

67. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 1: 143.

68. *Rph* 1991b, §185 (my emphasis).

69. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 159.

70. See Arendt, 1958.

71. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 160 (my emphasis).

72. See Arendt, 1951. Once justice becomes a right or function of citizenship in a particular group or nation, the stateless, who are without such membership, are exposed to the Hobbesian state of nature and to death.

73. *Rph* 1991b, 453 n. to §244.

74. Avineri, 1972.

75. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 161–162, alternative text W.

76. Such despair is evident in his comments at the conclusion of his 1821 manuscript: “How the present day is to solve its problems must be left up to it. In philosophy itself the resolution is only partial” (Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 161–162). This remark is not directed at the poor, but at the dispirited secular Enlightenment that has lost its metaphysical nerve, separated love from anguish, and justifies the pursuit of purely private self-interest, welfare, and enjoyment that abandons the poor to their fate, a fate produced by human arrangements.

77. A. Wood (Commentary to §244 in Hegel, 1991, 453) cites the lectures of 1819–1820 referenced earlier. This is not the place to deal with the question whether there is a “solution” for the problem of poverty, and if so, whether Hegel has managed to find it. See Houlgate, 1991; Anderson, 2001; Williams, 1998. Our concern here is not with the problem of poverty per se, but with its implications for understanding the nature and scope of reconciliation in the face of what appear to be irreconcilable, tragic conflicts.

78. *Rph* 1991b, §244.

79. The phrase is Hegel’s. See Hegel, 1991a, §234, where he speaks about “the contradictions which, at the standpoint of morality, drive us from pillar to post [*sich herumtreibt*].”

80. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 138.

81. *Rph* 1991b, §57. “the ineligibility of the human being in and for himself for slavery should no longer be apprehended merely as something which ought to be, is an insight which comes only when we recognize that the Idea of freedom is truly present only as the state.”

82. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 160. Hegel plays on *Aufklärung* (enlightenment) with *Ausklärung* (dis-enlightenment).

83. Hegel, 1984, *LPR* 3: 215 (my emphasis).

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The Place of Nationality in Hegel's Philosophy of Politics and Religion

A Defense of Hegel on the Charges of National Chauvinism and Racism

Nicholas Mowad

Hegel's treatment of the relation between the state and religion can appear inconsistent: Hegel sometimes seems to give religion priority (defending the authority of the religion *against* the state), while at other times he seems to do the reverse. For example, revealed religion for Hegel is *absolute* spirit, which presupposes objective spirit (whose highest form is the state) only in order to realize itself in it.¹ Hegel also explicitly maintains that while heroes (founders of states) have the absolute right to use violence, and generally to use human beings as means to accomplish their ends (so worthy an end is the establishment of the state), and that history will absolve them for such acts,² heroes have no right to degrade religion:³ in the sphere of religion the individual is sovereign and has this right against heroes and the state.⁴ Religion is an inner sanctum, removed from the din of world history:⁵ it is inalienable insofar

as it constitutes the very substance of a person.⁶ All of this would seem to indicate religion does take priority and have rights against the state. Yet, elsewhere Hegel says that though religion is the foundation of the state, it is *only* the foundation: religious feeling has no right against the laws of the state, and the individual conscience must not oppose itself to or exalt itself above the laws of the state.⁷ Despite such appearances, Hegel's understanding of religion and the state is completely consistent, as I will show. Yet to explain their precise relation, we must explain the relation of each to *nationality*. In the course of this, we will also see precisely what role geography plays in religion, statehood, nationality—and implicitly, race.

Race and nationality are deduced in immediate succession based on the same principle: the particularization of the “universal soul” as a consequence of natural-geographical variation.⁸ Recently many have taken to pointing to offensive comments supposedly made by Hegel in his lectures, and accusing Hegel (and by implied extension, speculative philosophy itself) of racism.⁹ Hegel's comments on race are few, and almost completely confined to Boumann's additions and other lecture notes (whose authenticity is always in doubt). Nationality however plays a more prominent role in his system, and thus is a more fruitful object of investigation. Since race and nationality are for Hegel only a more and a less general form of particularization based on the same principle,¹⁰ the findings of an investigation into whether Hegel is committed to national chauvinism can also shed light on whether Hegel is committed to racism. In this chapter, I will present the interrelations of nationality, religion, and statehood to show: first, that Hegel's account of the relation between state and religion is consistent; second, that leaving aside what Hegel the man may or may not have opined, Hegel the philosopher was not a national chauvinist (and according to the same principle, not a racist either).

1. The Relations between the Nation, the Nation-State, and National Religion

These terms themselves require explanation.¹¹ A nation is a community of people larger than a family or clan, whose members are bound together not by blood, but by a common culture and religion, that is, a shared understanding (whether tacit or expressed) of the fundamental nature of reality. A nation may also possess institutions and conventions that at

once emerge from and reflect this shared understanding, and safeguard and perpetuate it, regulating behavior in accordance with it. The "shared understanding" a nation has about the fundamental nature of reality (i.e., of the absolute, or God) is its *national religion*. The conventions which emerge from and regulate behavior in accordance with the national religion may be unconsciously adopted customs, or they may be the formal institutions and positive law of the *state*.¹²

For example, the ancient Persians conceived of the absolute as light: the universal element that shines on everything, giving it visible shape. Light does not alter the things it shines upon: it simply lets them be what they are, but makes them distinct, clear, and brilliant. Accordingly, the Persian nation was characterized by conventions which reflected this understanding: as light illuminates everything, the high and the low alike, so in Persia the Great King was one whom all could approach; and the Persian empire spread easily and rapidly because it did not suppress the distinctiveness of the nations which it incorporated, but simply "shined on them," allowing their peculiarity full expression.¹³ Whether the accessibility of the Persian king to his population and the liberality of the Persian empire were mere *national customs* or *features of the state* depends on the extent to which those characteristics were formalized and expressed as something positive. A nation is a felt bond between people that develops over generations and informs the customs and mores that are shared without necessarily being positively affirmed or enshrined in law.¹⁴ A state on the other hand is the definite structure and set of practices whereby a nation can express its religion and culture formally and positively in laws.

Accordingly, Hegel defines the nation as the state withdrawn into its substantial interiority (i.e., apart from its expression in positive laws), while the state is the development and actualization of the nation.¹⁵ That is, a nation is a culture based on a religion (a certain understanding of the absolute). This religion and the culture or national character it engenders may not be reflected upon or clearly articulated for its members; but the images belonging to this religion (and the corresponding national customs) receive their *positive* expression in the state. Thus what Hegel means when he says that religion is the foundation of the state, but *only* the foundation,¹⁶ is that: (1) the state's laws ought to agree with the religious representations proceeding from the nation's very heart (i.e., religion to this extent is indeed the foundation of the state); but (2) as the "actualization"¹⁷ of this religion, the state is itself the full flowering of national religiosity, and cannot be called to account by that religion (i.e.,

religion is *only* the foundation). Thus despite its positivity, the state is alien neither to the nation, nor to the national religion. Indeed, a nation has as its own immanent end to realize itself as a state, and to preserve itself as such.¹⁸ Yet, as we will see, this priority that the nation-state has over religion obtains only in relation to its *national* religion, and *not* to the *absolute* religion, namely, Christianity.¹⁹

Thus unlike the nation's customs (which are usually followed unreflectively²⁰), the laws of the state have a (qualified) objectivity that makes it possible for the individual consciously to take a position on them. The mental distance involved in considering the laws as objects allows the individual to see them as decrees to which she *may*, but *need not* assent—and hence somewhat arbitrary. Moreover, the combination of different families in “civil society” and their competition for resources and employment allows each person to see the law (which protects and is used by her rival) as something alien.²¹ As a consequence, the individual may become alienated from these positive laws. However, we say that the positivity of the laws is “qualified” in the state because if the state has genuinely been actualized, such alienation is impossible. Indeed, the state is precisely the overcoming of this alienation: it is the *self-conscious* ethical substance, the nation that knows its customs in positive form as laws, but whose members know these laws as their own, and will them as their own will.²²

National religion not only engenders the national customs and character which are expressed positively in the state's laws, but also functions to prevent or heal any rift between the nation and its state (as, e.g., the kind described earlier), reconciling the members of the nation to their culture's positive expression in the state.²³ Religions accomplish this by producing in people an ethical disposition, or habitual national character, that is, patriotism: the disposition to trust that the state is the mundane realization of the good.²⁴ The *Rig Veda* for example, tells of the primeval man (i.e., man as such) who was divided into parts: his mouth was the *brahmins* (priests), his arms the *ksatriyas* (nobles), his thighs the *vaiśyas* (producers, i.e., farmers and craftsmen), and his feet the *śūdras* (slaves).²⁵ Their religion thus shows Hindus how spirit realizes itself in a social world, with its division into particular castes: as the “mouth,” the *brahmins* speak to the gods; as the “arms,” the *ksatriyas* fight the nation's enemies; as the “thighs,” the loins, the *vaiśyas* work toward the nation's reproduction; and as the “feet,” the *śūdras* are the support which allows for the other castes to perform their functions. This myth therefore disposes Hindus to

recognize in the state the social order issuing from the absolute itself.²⁶ For Hegel, patriotism (the disposition to obey and support the laws of the state) is thus never something secular: it is always *religious*, always piety regarding the state.²⁷

Therefore national culture (proceeding from the national religion) may be something merely unreflectively *felt*: its customs simply ingrained and unconsciously carried out.²⁸ Yet in the state, these customs have positive form as *laws*.²⁹ Religion for its part is not the promulgation of positive laws: though many may see religion as a set of specific, pharisaical rules (thou shalt do this, thou shalt not do that, etc.), for Hegel that a religion should thus become something merely positive is an aberration to be explained.³⁰ Not only is national religion not a positive list of prescribed and proscribed actions, it actually functions to mitigate the stark positivity of the laws of the state, that is, to reconcile the members of the nation to the positivity of the objective expression of their customs in the state's laws.³¹

2. Geography and National Insularity

Nations thus have in their religion a feeling of the absolute, which for them justifies their particular way of life. Yet a nation does not necessarily know its particular way of life to be *only* a particular way, distinct from those of *other* nations, whose ways are *also* justified by *their own* genuine feelings of the absolute. Rather, for the nation, its way of life is simply the human way of life, the social world of spirit *simpliciter*.³² Hence the nation is subject to a kind of religious and cultural insularity. However, whether it realizes it or not, each nation *is* always only a *particular* nation, belonging only to a certain part of the world—that is, each nation is geographically determinate. To understand the connection between a nation's insularity and its geography, we must turn to the first place in the *Encyclopedia* where nationality appears: the anthropology.³³

That a mere nation³⁴ is necessarily particular without knowing it belongs to Hegel's first deduction of nationality which occurs, appropriately, at the opening of the philosophy of spirit, in the anthropology. For Hegel, the anthropology is the bridge between nature and spirit:³⁵ accordingly, nationality is at once natural and spiritual. Both nature and spirit are for Hegel concretions of "the idea."³⁶ As the culmination of Hegel's onto-logic, the idea is the most adequate definition of the absolute that

is possible without entering into either the philosophy of nature or of spirit. The idea is in a sense however already the complete definition of the absolute insofar as both nature and spirit are only the very same idea: nature is the idea external and indifferent to itself,³⁷ while spirit is the self-conscious idea that has itself for its object, knowing this object to be itself, returning to itself from the self-externality of nature.³⁸ That is, nature displays everything that is contained in the idea, but it does so in the form of corporeal externality. As the idea returns to itself as spirit however, what appeared as separate, mutually independent existences in nature are “idealized,” that is, posited as mere moments or aspects of the idea’s self-knowledge.³⁹ In the first form of spirit, all of nature is “idealized” in the simplicity of the soul, the immediate existence of spirit.⁴⁰

The soul is initially determined in the anthropology as “natural soul”: spirit failing to distinguish itself from corporeal nature, but still knowing itself *in* nature, in such a way that what in nature is external to itself is in this self-knowledge reduced to a mere moment of spirit’s being-for-itself.⁴¹ As natural soul, spirit (the self-knowing idea) knows itself immediately in and as nature (which, recall, is also the idea): that is, spirit at this stage fails to realize that insofar as it is the *self-knowing* idea (and that in this self-knowledge the idea *returns to itself*), it is not merely outside of itself (as the idea is in nature). Since the soul, immersed in nature, fails to posit its externality to itself, there results a proliferation of *particularizations* of the soul, each of which takes itself simply to be the soul *simpliciter*, the truth of all of nature.

Here we have Hegel’s deduction of the manifoldness of nations.⁴² It is because the world of nature is geographically diverse,⁴³ and because in its most primitive state (as natural soul) spirit does not distinguish itself from nature (identifying instead with nature immediately, without accounting for how nature’s diversity is to be reconciled with its own unity) that there must be a proliferation of many nations, that is, that at this stage the idea, or the absolute (God) will know itself (in the consciousness of human beings) in various *prima facie* irreconcilable ways (i.e., that there will be many national religions, hence many nations and many nation-states). The reason for the multiplicity of nations thus lies in the nature of “the soul,” which for Hegel is a body’s simple unity with itself that is present throughout what is nonetheless a material and hence manifold body: just as the soul of the individual human being pervades its entire body, indifferent to the material separateness of its parts to each

other, this “world soul” pervades all of nature.⁴⁴ Yet (continuing with this analogy), like the individual human body, the natural world is diverse.⁴⁵ But if the soul is identified with every part, and these parts differ from each other, then in some sense the soul is different from and opposed to itself (i.e., it is particularized in different ways).

The comparison of this “world soul” to the individual soul is helpful for understanding how Hegel sees nationality, so let us continue with this analogy. If an individual person (a simple soul) identifies with her body (a compound of many different parts) *unreflectively*, that is, without positing for herself this diversity and reconciling it in some way with her own unity as soul, then she will be subject to the kind of contradiction raised by Socrates against the Protagorean position (which also identifies the soul, i.e., the rationality which is “the measure” *immediately* with “the man”⁴⁶ as a manifold, corporeally existing object). Namely, if one covers one eye, leaving the other exposed, one will both see and not see the coat of another.⁴⁷ That is, on the level of the “natural soul,” the unreflective identification of the soul (which is one) with the body (which is manifold), allows the soul to be affirmed as at once sighted and blind. In the same way, the world soul’s immediate pervasion of and identification with all of nature (which is manifold and diverse) renders the universal soul diverse from itself, knowing itself in different, contradictory ways. Each of these “ways” in which the soul knows itself is a national spirit.⁴⁸

That is, since nature shows immense geographical variety, spirit’s self-knowledge at this stage is distributed among different nations.⁴⁹ Moreover, (1) since at this stage no way to reconcile the world soul’s unity and the diversity of nature has been deduced, each particularization of the world soul simply knows itself as the soul of the world *simpliciter*, the truth of all of nature; (2) national distinctions reflect distinctions in nature—that is, a nation’s character reflects its natural environment, insofar as each nation is the idea knowing itself immediately in precisely those natural conditions. Returning to the Platonic analogy for clarity’s sake: the individual soul “knows itself” in many particular ways, according to the diversity in the natural conditions of the body: the soul knows itself in the closed eye as seeing nothing, and in the opened eye as seeing a coat. Moreover each particularization of the soul would take itself to be simply the soul itself (i.e., the person can say both “*I see the coat*” and “*I do not see the coat*”), unaware in each utterance that the soul has other, contrary determinations elsewhere in the body. Let us take Rome

as an example of how spirit, in a certain nation, lives in certain natural circumstances while failing to distinguish itself from its natural environment and to posit itself as particular.⁵⁰

The Roman national spirit is one of forced unification of parts that do not in themselves seem to belong together. Thus in Rome's mythic religion,⁵¹ the Roman nation conceived of itself as having been founded by two brothers cast out of civilization,⁵² who attracted whatever renegades and wanderers they could to begin a new city.⁵³ Thus also, this male society could only reproduce itself by the forced abduction of the Sabine women;⁵⁴ and all of Roman history is the history of conquest and forced integration of other nations into an empire. The same character which receives spiritual expression in the Roman nation, religion, and nation-state is unconsciously present already in the natural geography of Italy: Italy lacks a natural center, such that its north is unlike its middle and south (whose center is Rome).⁵⁵ As Italy itself was a forced union of various elements, so did the Roman nation conceive of itself in its national religion, and so did it realize its national character in its state. The Roman spirit and its geography thus exhibit a strong isomorphism.

To be sure, geography does not mechanically determine the shape of the national spirit. Hegel does say that the soul's particularization (i.e., the nation) "expresses"⁵⁶ the natural division of continents, but we should not take this to mean that these geographical phenomena are *in a mechanical sense* the cause of nationality, as a crude materialism would have it. Rather, we should recall that for spirit, nature is necessary only as its presupposition (*Voraussetzung*), the material which it sets (*setzt*) before (*vor*) itself in order to realize itself in it.⁵⁷ In this way (viz., as the *purpose* or *final cause* of nature), spirit is the *truth* of nature.⁵⁸ There is thus indeed an isomorphism between a nation's geography and its religion and culture; but this is only because in national religion and culture, spirit transforms what in nature remain outside of each other (e.g., mountains, valleys, rivers) into mere *moments* of its own return to itself, as it knows itself in a particular way (in the case of Rome, as the forced union of disparate elements). Therefore it is not that Italy's geography exerted a causal force on the optic nerves of ancient Italians, thus producing images of its landscape in their brains, such that from these electrical impulses, ancient Rome was somehow mechanically generated. Rather, the Roman nation, as a form of spirit, is *prior* to the natural Italian geography, insofar as it sublates the externality of Italian geography to itself, reducing these natural phenomena to mere moments of its own self-knowledge,

a self-knowledge displayed in its national religion (including its mythic early "history").

Yet though in national religion spirit sublates nature's self-externality, national religion remains an inadequate form of spirit's self-knowledge insofar as a nation—though it may not know it—remains particular. National religion sublates nature's self-externality only in a limited way: for example, the Roman religion sublates only the self-externality of the *Italian* portion of the natural world (which is not the same as, e.g., the Persian portion), and not nature generally (thus the Roman spirit differs from the Persian spirit).⁵⁹ Thus in a sense, it is because a nation is geographically determinate that its national religion is always only a *determinate* religion (as Hegel notes);⁶⁰ though in a deeper sense, national religion is necessarily a determinate religion because the very essence of nationality (as a shape of the natural soul) implies a self-knowledge that is immersed in *nature* (which is necessarily determinate, and outside of itself).⁶¹ Moreover, the essence of nationality implies not only the nation's particularity and limitation, but also the nation's blindness (to the extent that it is *merely* a nation) to this particularity.

Thus *for us*, Roman religion was *merely* national, merely the religion of one particular nation, the truth of only a *determinate part* of nature. Yet for the Romans, their religion was simply *the* religion; their nation was simply *the* nation (and all other peoples were only potential Romans). That any (mere) nation necessarily fails to posit itself as particular means that when nations encounter each other, each takes itself to be spirit *simpliciter* (and hence, implicitly, the sole legitimate nation). Indeed, each nation *is* a legitimate determination of the universal soul, despite the fact that nations differ and oppose each other, but no nation is the truth of *all* of nature.

It being granted that insularity and chauvinism are implicit in the very concept of nationality, it is clear that international conflict is inevitable. In such conflict, it would seem that there can be no neutral vantage point from which one may judge which nation (if any) is in the right and which acts unjustly: each nation has its own feeling of the absolute (i.e., its own religion), which is rooted in the natural peculiarity of its land. On what basis might one hope to compare different nations?

The basis for such a comparison lies in the expression each nation gives itself in its state, and in the relations (including war) these nation-states naturally establish between themselves. In these international relations spirit purifies itself of that in it which is *merely national* (which is

also that in it which is *merely natural*),⁶² and thus the state is revealed in its proper form: not as this or that nation-state, but rather *world history*, the process whereby one nation-state supplants another.⁶³ This process is carried forward by the progressive revelation of that which is merely national (and merely natural) in one and the next nation-state as an inadequacy in the face of a nation-state whose national religion more adequately represents the idea. The order of the succession of religions in the philosophy of religion is the same as the order of the succession of nation-states in the philosophy of world history,⁶⁴ because the distinctive political character of a nation-state (its laws, institutions, etc.) in virtue of which it overtakes another nation-state is only the positive expression of its national *culture*, which is itself unconsciously shaped by the feeling of the absolute that a people has in its national religion, in which it sublates the self-externality of its own region of the natural world. But these religions, these various feelings of the absolute, are not simply different, unrelated, and equally valid impressions: they are comparatively more or less adequate to the absolute itself. Therefore when one nation-state supplants another as the leading nation-state in global political affairs, it is ultimately only because its national religion is a more adequate form of spirit's self-knowledge.⁶⁵ Thus Persia succeeds India in the philosophy of history because while Hinduism feels the absolute as Brahman, it does not know what this "Brahman" is, representing it only abstractly as the fundamental unity of everything (which however *excludes* determinacy),⁶⁶ while Zoroastrianism knows *objectively* this absolute, this unity of everything, as *light*.⁶⁷ What thus may appear as a contingency of the history of nation-states thus has its source in the progress of spirit's self-knowledge.

That there must be such a succession of national religions and nation-states is implicit in the fact that though nature is diverse, the world is still *one world*, a single totality⁶⁸ which possesses (in the manner appropriate to nature) everything contained in the idea. Thus although on the level of the soul spirit is immersed in nature's variety and difference from itself, and consequently knows itself in many diverse and apparently irreconcilable ways—that is, although there are many national religions and nation-states—spirit overcomes this fragmentation by *positing* (in history) its particularity in various nations; and, as absolute spirit (Christianity, and also philosophy), spirit grasps the single principle that is realized in this national variety and in the political history of *the world* (and not merely one portion of it), knowing itself in this, the perfect objectification of itself—namely, *the state*.⁶⁹

Many commentators object to the role Hegel gives to world history. Even those sympathetic to Hegel often object that according to his own logical principles, Hegel should have shown how the fracturing of humanity into different nation-states is healed by the creation of some international governing body, capable of ensuring perpetual peace.⁷⁰ Yet Hegel argued and history has shown (and indeed, these scholars recognize) how weak international organizations like the United Nations are. The only other alternative would be a *nation*-state which spans the entire world.⁷¹ However, the very definition of nature (as self-externality) makes impossible the creation of a universal nation-state. Given the way Hegel understands nationality (as a form of the natural soul, and the *particularization* of the universal soul), there must always be *many* nations. Because nature is various, nations are of necessity numerous: thus there can be no universal national culture or universal national religion on which such a global nation-state would have to be based.⁷² Not only are their proposed solutions unworkable, but these commentators have also incorrectly interpreted Hegel's conceptions of nationality and history as problems.

As one nation-state succeeds another because its national religion is more adequate, it may *seem* that the national religion of the ruling nation-state (whichever it may be) will never be completely adequate (because it remains only a *national* religion, the sublation of the natural conditions of only a *certain* part of the world). However, it is not the case that the *state proper* (i.e., world history) is only ever the story of a *certain* nation-state, whose feeling of the absolute may be more adequate than those of other nations, but which remains *merely* national (and merely natural), and hence limited and to that extent inadequate to the absolute. In contrast to the nation-state, which is the positive expression of the culture of a nation whose character is constituted by a *national* religion (which is in turn a form of spiritual self-knowledge that is geographically determinate, and hence limited), the state proper is the manifestation of the *limitation* of the validity of all national religions and nation-states. As the national religion is meant to reconcile a people to the positive expression of its culture in its nation-state (but is powerless to reconcile its people to the state proper, i.e., the clashes of nations in world history), so the *absolute* religion is meant to reconcile *all* peoples, *all* nations to the positive expression of the absolute itself in the state proper (i.e., world history): this religion is what Hegel calls "Christianity." This absolute religion must be *supernational* just as the state is. But, how are this supernatural religion and state to come to be? Here we hit on an integral

but little-noted aspect of Hegel's system: Hegel's entire project depends on the emergence of a certain peculiar "nation," one which is necessarily unlike other nations, and indeed is in a certain sense *un-national*, or even *anti-national*. This "nation" is not the Jews (as in the traditional account of Christianity), but rather the "Germans."

3. The "Germans"

First, we must note that Hegel does not mean by "Germans" what one might think. History's final stage is the *germanische*, not *deutsche Welt*. The ambiguity exists only for English-speakers, who call *Deutschland* "Germany." The "Germans" include all of the peoples who convert to Christianity.⁷³ It is the Germans' conversion, or their susceptibility to conversion, which is important for Hegel: we might say therefore that the Germans are characterized by *Gemüt* (heart, soul, or disposition). However, the problem in saying that Germans are *characterized* by *Gemüt* is that *Gemüt* is the indeterminate totality of spirit, the openness to all feelings and fixation on none: that is, *Gemüt* is the *opposite* of a determinate *character* in virtue of which one consistently pursues some inclinations and rejects others.⁷⁴

Accordingly, though the Germans are prominent in Hegel's philosophy of history, he does not celebrate them the way subsequent German (*deutsch*) nationalists would, namely, as a "superior race." The Germans for Hegel were only unshaped clay,⁷⁵ that is, "barbarians": certainly, Hegel does not disparage the Germans, but neither does he admire their rudimentary barbarian culture (as, e.g., Wagner did).⁷⁶ The Germans are important for Hegel precisely because they had *no* culture, or at least no strong culture that could not be easily set aside in their conversion to Christianity.⁷⁷ Accordingly, Hegel despised German mythology.⁷⁸

The Germans are important, then, only because they were a nation that lacked any determinate national character (or, their national character was to have only indeterminate *Gemüt*, absence of character). We have seen how other nations have their characters in virtue of the fact that in them spirit sublates the externality of a certain portion of the natural world, reducing it to a moment of its being-for-itself, and this being-for-itself is the national religion of such a people, in accordance with which their national character is formed, and eventually, their nation-state. For a nation to be without character, it would therefore have to *lack* such a

home in a certain part of the natural world: this is precisely how it is with the Germans. Thus instead of discussing the geographical and climatic phenomena pertinent to German nationality (as Hegel typically does regarding other nations),⁷⁹ Hegel discusses “Barbarian migrations,”⁸⁰ that is, the passage of the Germans from one place to another. Such migration follows from the German *Gemüt*, insofar as the Germans are not fixed in any region of nature, but rather feel at home everywhere in the world.⁸¹

Because the Germans are from nowhere in particular, their “national religion,” if we can even speak of such a thing, is simply openness, absence of fixity; but because of this openness, they are susceptible to the *absolute* religion, which is not spirit’s being-for-itself in a determinate part of the natural world, but rather spirit’s being-for-itself after having purified itself of everything merely natural. Since Christianity is not a national religion, it is only the Christian who is able to be reconciled to *the state proper* (world history), the manifestation of the limitation of the validity of all national religions and nation-states.⁸²

For this reason I must disagree with Professor Andrew Buchwalter, who, while rightfully arguing that Hegel cannot be understood as “Eurocentric” (i.e., as chauvinistically asserting the superiority of one nation or race), bases his argument on the claim that no determinate historical realization can be the final, complete realization of spirit: “Any culture, including that of Europe, sustains itself only in surpassing itself.”⁸³ But for Hegel, the “German” spirit *cannot* be surpassed, because the surpassing of a culture is the positing of that in it which is merely natural (i.e., its *Naturnotwendigkeit*),⁸⁴ and the “German” spirit emerges free from any tie to nature. The reason why Hegel is not a chauvinist or racist is not because for him the “Germans” are a limited nation like any other, it is rather because the “Germans” are in a very real sense *not a nation at all*, and consequently lack the limitations of nationality. The apex of Hegel’s “racial” and “national” hierarchy is thus a non-race and a non-nation, a spirit and culture which is *beyond* race and nationality, having liberated itself from these and all such other merely natural determinations. The “German” spirit and “Christian” spirit are both really just the *modern* spirit as Hegel understands it; and this modern spirit is *in principle* transracial and transnational.⁸⁵

Thus any culture, no matter its location or language—even the historical Germans (the Franks, Goths, et al.)—which is not anti-national in the way described earlier, cannot be called “German” in the true Hegelian sense of the term. Likewise, anyone who *is* anti-national in this way is

“German”—regardless of their color, language, or other attributes. Hegel is thus not committed to the superiority of any race or nationality as these terms are commonly understood. All he need be committed to is that there must be *some* such anti-national nation, which is reconciled with *the state as such* (i.e., world history) rather than only with a nation-state—and that this anti-national nation expresses most properly *the spirit of the entire world*, that is, of *all* nations. Hegel only called this special “nation” “the Germans” because of his understanding of the Reformation and the French Revolution (as the overcoming of the inadequacy of medieval, or “Catholic” Europe by healing the split between sacred and secular, sacralizing politics and history and secularizing a previously otherworldly religion). We should not however take “German-ness” to be confined to northwestern Europe, or to be possessed or transmitted in any merely natural way. The need for an anti-national nation is *structural* in Hegel’s system, but his identification of certain parts of Europe as filling this role exceptionally well is *debatable* as a matter of *judgment*, on whose correctness the fundamental integrity of the system does not depend. It should be clear by this point that “Christianity” for Hegel does not mean what it does for most people. Christianity for Hegel is the spirit of *modernity*: the “Christian” is simply the one who believes that neither nature nor the social world is Godforsaken, and that all nations are legitimate to a certain extent, but no mere nation (aside from the anti-national spirit of modern “Christians”) is the truth of the world as such.⁸⁶ Thus for Hegel many (perhaps most) educated people of the modern world today would be considered “Christian” (and also “German”), no matter if from habit or sentimentality (or more likely, ignorance of Hegel’s use of the term “Christianity”), they continue to call themselves Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, or secular humanist.⁸⁷

Returning to the question of the relation between religion and the state, it is clear that *national* religion has no rights against the *nation-state*: the latter is the actualization of the former, with which the latter must therefore agree, but by which it cannot be called to account. National religion is prior to its nation-state only in the sense that the nation-state is the objective realization of the national religion, and the national religion knows this objectification as itself, subsuming its otherness. Likewise, Christianity (the supernational religion) cannot take issue with the world history (the supernational state)—that is, Christianity cannot deem world history *fundamentally* unjust: the absolute religion is

prior to the state proper only in the sense that Christianity is freed from the externality that belongs to world history, insofar as in its religious feeling the absolute recognizes itself in this object, sublating its otherness. Yet the “Christian”⁸⁸ *does* have the right to pass judgment on any individual *nation*-state, insofar as the “Christian” is privy to a truth that is higher and more concrete than the one a *mere* nation-state actualizes and represents.⁸⁹ It goes without saying of course, that this “passing judgment” must not impugn the validity of the nation-state as such, but only *limit* the nation-state’s claim to *absolute* validity, the claim to be the truth of *all* of nature.

Notes

1. *Enc.* §552 and R; cf. §381.
2. *Rph* §350, *TW* 12, 49–50.
3. *TW* 12, 49–50.
4. *TW* 12, 49–50.
5. *TW* 12, 54.
6. *Rph* §66 and R.
7. *Rph* §270 R; see also *Rph* §144, where Hegel says that the laws are exalted above “subjective opinions and prejudices.”
8. *Enc.* §§391–394. The meaning of this will be explained further on.
9. For an articulation of this accusation, see Bernasconi, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2003; Gordon, 1997; Hoffheimer, 2001 and 2005; and Parekh, 2009. I admire the critical attitude of these commentators, but I will argue in this chapter that they have been a bit too hasty in judging Hegel to be a racist and/or a chauvinist.
10. *Enc.* §§393–394. See also *TW* 13, 38–48.
11. “Nation” is my translation of *Nation* and *Volk*. Additionally I translate *Sittlichkeit* as “nationality” when it is used in the general sense and not to refer to specific institutions (such as the family, corporations, or the state). I also translate *ethnische* as “national.” *Staat* refers, as we will see, sometimes to the nation-state, sometimes to world history. *Religion* is unambiguous except (as we will see) insofar as it could refer either to a determinate or national religion (*bestimmte* or *ethnische Religion*), or to the fulfilled, revealed, absolute religion (*vollendete, offenbare, absolute Religion*), that is, Christianity.
12. To be sure, in the state the laws do not remain *merely* positive. The positivity of the law belongs to the stage of *Sittlichkeit* which precedes the state, namely, “civil society [*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*],” where the nation is external to itself, relating to itself as to another (*Enc.* §§529–530). For example, employer

and employee relate to each other in “civil society”: each uses the other as a means for his own end (*Enc.* §523; *Rph* §§182–183). When one turns to the law to seek his own interest, the law thus appears to the other as something merely positive and opposed to himself. In the state however, the individual (citizen) knows these laws to be his own (even if they contravene his interest as it is narrowly conceived), and wills them as his own will (*Enc.* §535; *Rph* §258 R). Yet since the positivity of the law is, though sublated, still a feature of the state, it is appropriate in contrasting the state with the mere nation to emphasize the fact that in the state the laws are not “unconscious custom” (*Enc.* §552), but rather regulations known in their objectivity.

13. *TW* 12, 215–216. See also Hegel, 1985, 504–506.

14. As Hegel says, “each nation has a time-honored [*hergebrachte*] national trait, its own manner of eating, drinking, and its own customs in the rest of its way of life” (*TW* 1, 106).

15. “[D]ie Sittlichkeit der auf sein substantielles Inneres zurückgeführte Staat, dieser die Entwicklung und Verwirklichung derselben . . . ist” (*Enc.* §552 R). See also where Hegel says, “The general principle which in the state stands out and becomes known, the form under which is brought everything the state involves, is that principle on which the *culture* of a nation [*die Bildung einer Nation*] is based” (*TW* 12, 69).

16. *Rph* §270 R.

17. *Enc.* §552 R.

18. *Enc.* §549 R. See also *Rph* §§349–350.

19. Hegel leaves this caveat unspoken in the remark to *Rph* §270 where he says that religion is the foundation but only the foundation of the state, but this very important nuance can be pieced together by culling all of the relevant material from the *Rph*, volume three of the *Enc.*, and the lectures on the philosophies of history and religion (which I hope to have accomplished in this essay).

20. It is this kind of unreflective following of the national way of life that Hegel describes as an “immediate relation, and an identity that is closer even than faith or trust” (*Rph* §147) insofar as faith and trust are reflective acts and imply a conscious choice in favor of (what would hence be) the *object* of reflection (*Rph* §147 R).

21. *Enc.* §523, *Rph* §§182–183.

22. *Enc.* §535, *Rph* §258 R. See also note 12 in this chapter.

23. This is what Hegel means when he says that the national spirit (*Volksgeist*) *thinks* in its ethical or national life (*Sittlichkeit*), and sublates the finitude belonging to its nation-state (i.e., the state’s mere positivity: e.g., the state’s apparently arbitrary temporal interests, etc.), knowing itself in its essentiality (*Enc.* §552). The “knowing” and “thinking” here are the national religion. The sublation of the finitude of the state is the nation’s reconciliation with its state in

the latter's positive, external existence—a reconciliation which is acquired through the national religion.

24. Hegel discusses the ethical or political disposition in the *Rph* §§150–151 and §268 and R. He does not in these paragraphs mention that it is religion which engenders this disposition, saying rather that it is custom to which one becomes habituated by the national way of life (*Rph* §151). Yet it is because these customs are themselves engendered by the national religion that only two paragraphs after discussing the political disposition he feels the need to address the relation between religion and the state. There he says that it is religion that integrates the state at the deepest level of the ethical and political disposition of its members (*Rph* §270 R). Without this disposition in the citizenry, the state would be only an external force, compelling the obedience of the public, which would hence not see the state as its own spirit objectified. Hegel could not be more clear on this point in the *Enc.*: “the nation [*Sittlichkeit*] is the state withdrawn into its substantial interiority; the state is the development and actualization of the nation; however, the substantiality of the nation and the state is religion. The state is thus based on this relation to the ethical [or national] disposition [*sittlichen Gesinnung*], and the latter is based on religion” (*Enc.* §552 R). He is equally clear in the lectures on the philosophy of history (*TW* 12, 68–74). The lectures on the philosophy of religion likewise confirm that it is religion which engenders the customs and disposition of the citizens to see in the state and its laws the spirit of their own spirit. See, for example, where Hegel makes this point in the 1827 lectures (Hegel, 1984, 257–258), and again in a different way in the 1831 lectures (*TW* 16, 213–215).

25. O'Flaherty, 1987, 28. See also: *The Laws of Manu* 1.31, 1.87–91 (O'Flaherty, 1991, 6–7, 12–13); and *TW* 12, 183.

26. There are of course many more examples. Though his findings remain controversial, Georges Dumézil has attempted to show that all variants of Indo-European religion articulate a “tri-functional” social order, composed of priests, warriors, and producers (Dumézil, 1958). Take for example the Scythian myth in which three objects fell from the sky: a cup, an axe, and a plow. Three brothers each picked up one of these objects, thus establishing the social order: the one who picked up the cup (the instrument used in sacrifices) became the priest; the one who picked up the axe became the warrior; and the one who picked up the plow became the producer. Of course, in the aforementioned Indian myth a fourth class (of slaves) is added: yet for Hindus the position of the *śūdras* outside of the tri-functional Indo-European social structure can be explained by the fact that they do not actually belong to the social order at all. Thus *śūdras* cannot study the Vedas, as they are only once-born, not twice-born (*The Laws of Manu* 10.1–4 [O'Flaherty, 1991, 234]), the second birth being the initiation and integration into Hinduism (and hence into the Hindu nation). Moreover,

non-Hindus (who are obviously outside of the Hindu social order) are classified as śūdras, no matter their class or occupation in their own country (*The Laws of Manu* 10.45–49 [O’Flaherty, 1991, 241]).

27. That is why Hegel became so vexed by those who would try to separate religion and the state (*Enc.* §552 R; *Rph* §270 R; *TW* 12, 68–74).

28. Thus Hegel calls the customs that constitute the national culture “bewußtlose Sitte” (*Enc.* §552), that is, unconscious customs.

29. In German the term for the English word “law” (when this refers not to law in general but to the specific product of legislative determination) is *Gesetz*. This is related to the word *setzen*, “to posit.” A *Gesetz* is thus necessarily a *positive* law. Again, we must note that in the state the laws are not apprehended as *merely* positive, that the state reconciles its people to the laws that—were there only to be civil society but no state—would appear as merely positive. My point is that the patriotism whereby the state thus reconciles its citizens is in fact the *piety* of the national religion.

30. This is of course his object in *Die Positivität der christlichen Religion* (*TW* 1, 104–229).

31. This is what Hegel means when he calls religion the substantiality of the nation itself and the state (“die Substantialität . . . der Sittlichkeit selbst und des Staats die Religion ist”) (*Enc.* §552 R). Hegel’s conception of religion was thus that it is the living core of a people, from which all other national or cultural expressions proceed: “The philosophy of religion must come to know the logical necessity in the progress of the determinations of that which we call the absolute; it must come to know to which determinations the kind of cultus corresponds, how the worldly self-consciousness, the consciousness of what is man’s highest vocation [*Bestimmung*], and thereby how the nature of a people’s ethical life, the principle of its law, its actual freedom and its constitution, its art and science correspond to the principle which constitutes the substance of a religion. The insight that all of these moments of a people’s actuality constitute a systematic totality, that *one* spirit creates and forms them, is based on the principle [*Grunde*] that the history of religion coincides with the history of the world” (*Enc.* §562 R; cf. *TW* 12, 68–74). In this conception Hegel was likely influenced by Herder, who expressed the same idea on the level of the individual: “Religion addresses one’s very heart [*Gemüth*]; it inspires total conviction. In all stations and classes of society human beings may only be human in the knowledge and practice of religion. Religion takes hold of all human inclinations and desires in order to harmonize them all with it and guide them to the right path” (Herder, 1967c, 135). Like Hegel, Herder also at times calls this unifying principle “reason” (Herder, 1967a, 28–29). It is also worth noting that Schelling would later argue that a nation only becomes a nation through its mythology, its religion (Schelling, 1959, 62–66).

32. Thus in the above-cited myth from the *Rig Veda*, it is not only the people of a certain part of the globe who will be organized into those castes. The primeval man Prajāpati (i.e., *man as such*, spirit itself) is divided into those parts: thus for the ancient Hindu, the whole world was only *brahmins*, *ksatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *sūdras* (the last of which include the people of all other nations) (*The Laws of Manu* 10.45–49 [O’Flaherty, 1991, 241]). For the Greeks also, “It is right that Greeks / should rule barbarians [i.e., all who are not Greek]” (Euripides, 2000, ll. 1400–1401). See also Aristotle, 1962, 1252b8.

33. Nationality appears mainly in three places in Hegel’s system. First, it appears in one paragraph (*Enc.* §394) in subjective spirit’s anthropology section. Second, it appears as *Sittlichkeit* in the objective spirit section: this includes the introductory paragraphs to the *Sittlichkeit* section (in the *Enc.* as well as the *Rph*) as well as the paragraphs and the lectures on world history. Finally, nationality appears in his treatment of all “determinate religions” in the lectures on the philosophy of religion (insofar as he says that all determinate religions are national [*ethnische*] religions) (Hegel, 1985, 412). (Nationality appears also in Hegel’s lectures on aesthetics, but we will not concern ourselves in this essay with what he says there). The introductory paragraphs to ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) concern ethical life in general rather than specific ethical institutions like the family, corporations, and the state, among others. Accordingly, Hegel describes ethical life there in a way that agrees with his deduction of nationality in the anthropology, and with his discussion of the various national religions in the lectures on the philosophy of religion. Moreover, Hegel expressly identifies nationality with ethical life in both the *Enc.* (§514) and the *Rph* (§156). One thing I hope to accomplish in writing this essay is to contribute to an explanation as to how “nationality” is to be understood for Hegel, given its appearance in such diverse contexts throughout the philosophy of spirit.

34. Whenever I say “mere nation” in this essay, I mean a nation considered apart from its realization of itself in a state. In its initial deduction in the anthropology (coming as it does 141 paragraphs before the deduction of the state), the nation can *only* be considered as a “mere nation,” though this should not be taken to contradict Hegel’s later deduction (*Enc.* §549 R) that a nation has its realization in statehood as an immanent end.

35. For Hegel, the soul (the object of the anthropology) “stands midway between nature lying behind it on the one hand and the world of ethical freedom which works itself out of natural spirit [*Naturgeist*] on the other” (*Enc.* §391 A).

36. *Enc.* §§212–213.

37. *Enc.* §247.

38. *Enc.* §381.

39. This is what Hegel means by calling spirit the truth of nature (*Enc.* §§381, 388).

40. *Enc.* §388.

41. *Enc.* §391 and A.

42. That is, here we have the philosophical comprehension of the principle that Judaism represents as the “confusion of tongues” resulting from the construction of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9). The principle of national variation is the very same as the one justifying “racial distinction [*Rassenverschiedenheit*]” (*Enc.* §393). Racial distinction for Hegel is simply more general: in his lectures he divides humanity principally into Africans, (East and South) Asians, and Europeans (which includes North Africans and West Asians) (*Enc.* §393 A). This distinction “proceeds [*geht . . . hisaus*]” into more precise national distinctions (*Enc.* §394). Likewise, in Judaism the national distinction resulting from the Tower of Babel follows the previous distinction of races in the three sons of Noah: Shem (the ancestor of the Semitic peoples), Japheth (the ancestor of the Indo-European peoples), and Ham (the ancestor of the African peoples) (Genesis 9:18–10:32). At the time this myth was composed the Jews apparently had no knowledge of the peoples of East Asia, and of course nor did they know of the peoples of what would later be called North and South America.

43. *Enc.* §339.

44. It is important to note however that this “world-soul [*Weltseele*]” (*Enc.* §391) has actuality only in individual human beings. The natural world is thus not a thinking subject for Hegel like the world soul of Plato’s *Timaeus* seems to be (Plato, 1989, 30b–37a).

45. *Enc.* §339.

46. Plato, 1992, 152a.

47. Plato, 1992, 165b–c.

48. Here also, Hegel seems to have been influenced by Herder, according to whom “the mythology of each people is an expression of the particular way they saw nature” (Herder, 1967b, 307).

49. *Enc.* §394.

50. For other examples of the role of geography in nationality, see Hegel’s frequent remarks in the lectures on the philosophy of world history on the importance of climate and geography on the character of a people (e.g., *TW* 12, 105–133, 217–218, 232–233, 256–259, 277, 287–288, 341–342), and also Hegel’s enthusiastic endorsement of Montesquieu’s position that the peculiar character of a people (which is connected with its geography and climate) has a determining influence on what form of government they have, which laws they adopt, and how they are interpreted and applied (e.g., *Rph* §3 R, §261 R, §273 R). Here too, Hegel was probably also influenced by Herder (Herder, 1967b, 257–258, 265–273).

51. Rome’s early “history” of itself was certainly mythic, that is, *religious*. The heroes described in such stories fit into forms that pervade Indo-European religions generally. See, for example, the structural analysis that Dumézil provides of the ostensibly “historical” personages of Horatius Cocles and Caius Mucius

(Scævola) (Dumézil, 1948, 169–177), and also of Romulus and Numa (Dumézil, 1948, 55–75). That some structures are common to other Indo-European religions of course does not prevent these from being distinctly Roman religious representations, insofar as many details, as well as the meaning attached to these (admittedly widespread) mythologems, are culturally specific.

52. Livy, 1969, 22.

53. Livy, 1969, 26–27.

54. Livy, 1969, 27–28.

55. *TW* 12, 341–342.

56. *Enc.* §393.

57. *Enc.* §381.

58. *Enc.* §§381, 388.

59. One nation's difference from another may be initially experienced by either as a sign of the perversion and monstrosity of *the other* nation (i.e., that the other nation is *barbaric*), insofar as the other nation departs from the first nation's own national spirit (which this first nation unreflectively takes to be the only legitimate way of life). Yet Hegel's analysis shows that in truth, one nation's difference from another is a sign of the determinacy and hence the *limited* legitimacy of *each* nation.

60. Hegel equates determinate religion with national (*ethnische*) religion in his 1827 lectures on the philosophy of religion (Hegel, 1985, 412).

61. *Enc.* §247.

62. The proof that the state can be not merely *national* is also the proof that the state can be something not merely *natural*. Nationality is distinct from statehood precisely because nationality “contains nature-necessity [*Naturnotwendigkeit*]” (*Enc.* §552), that is, it exists as a geographically determinate phenomenon (not merely with regard to its location in space, but more importantly, insofar as it is the truth only of a determinate part of nature).

63. The state, the final form of “ethical life” (i.e., the complete expression of *Sittlichkeit*, nationality), is itself divided in a threefold way: in its immediate existence it is the individual nation-state in its internal constitution (*inneres Staatsrecht*) (*Enc.* §§537–546); in the individual nation-state's relation to other individual nation-states, it is international law, or the external constitution (*äußere Staatsrecht*) (*Enc.* §547); in its most concrete form, it is world history (*Weltgeschichte*) (*Enc.* §§548–552).

64. *Enc.* §562 R.

65. Of course, this is not to exclude contingency in history, nor to claim that anything whatsoever that occurs is justified (see for example *Enc.* §135 A). It is only to observe with Martin Luther King Jr. that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice” (King, 1991, 252).

66. *TW* 12, 194–196. See also Hegel's 1827 lectures on the philosophy of religion (Hegel, 1985, 491). We must of course disagree with Hegel on this representation of Hinduism. Whether Brahman should be understood as *nirguna*

(as unity without qualification) or as *saguna* (as qualified by attributes, and as a personal God, the object of devotion) is a debate that has long been at the heart of the Hindu intellectual tradition.

67. *TW* 12, 215–216. See also the 1827 lectures on the philosophy of religion, for example, Hegel 1984, 191–192. Again, we must take issue with the inadequacy that Hegel claims to find in Hinduism. It is, as mentioned in the previous note, a contentious claim that Brahman should be understood as devoid of internal differentiation. Not only is there an abundance of textual support in Hindu scripture for the interpretation of Brahman as containing difference within itself, but sometimes Brahman is even likened to *light*. See, for example, the *Bṛihad-āranyaka Upanishad* 4.3.2–6 (Hume, 1971, 133) where ātman (the individual self, which is held to be identical with Brahman) is said to be the light that the human being has even when the sun and moon are set, the fire has gone out, and speech is silenced (a similar description appears in Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 6.14 [Hume, 1971, 410]). See also *Bṛihad-āranyaka Upanishad* 6.3.4, *Chāndogya Upanishad* 3.13.7, *Mundaka Upanishad* 2.2.9–10, and *Maitri Upanishad* 6.35 where Brahman is called light (Hume, 1971, 166, 209, 373, 449–450), as well as *Chāndogya Upanishad* 4.15.4, where it is said that Brahman is the light-bringer (*bhāmatī*), for it shines (*bhā*) in all worlds (Hume, 1971, 224) and *Katha Upanishad* 5.15 where it is said that Brahman is the self-luminous light shining on everything (Hume, 1971, 358). In addition to these revealed texts of Hinduism, major commentators within the tradition such as Śāṅkara use light to describe the nature of Brahman: see his *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* I.i.5 (Śāṅkarācārya, 1983, 49), among other places.

68. *Enc.* §338 and A.

69. In other words, nature, like spirit, is “a temple of God, which he fills and in which he is present” (*Enc.* §246 A), that is, like spirit, nature expresses the idea in its totality, but it does so in the medium of *space*, while spirit (as world history) expresses the idea in *time*. Admittedly, space is the most abstract, mechanical category, while the geological totality is the (more concrete) first stage of organics; yet the fact remains that the geological world remains merely natural, and thus its mountains, valleys, and rivers are outside of each other *spatially* (“The members of the geological organism are in fact outside of each other and therefore without a soul” [*Enc.* §339 A (a)]). In the history of the world on the other hand, nations succeed each other *in time*. In the philosophy of nature, time succeeds space because different spaces determine each other but this negativity is not posited as belonging to space as such (space thus has a sort of “insularity” analogous to that of mere nations); yet in time, each instant is explicitly determined by the previous one (such that negativity is posited as inherent in time) (*Enc.* §§254–258). Similarly, one part of the geological world is simply external to the surrounding parts, which determine it: and the *mere* nation, which fails to distinguish itself from nature, fails also to understand itself

as only a *determinate* nation, with a *determinate* religion. In *the state* however, that is, in world history, each nation, along with its national religion and nation-state are *posited* as determinate and succeeding each other in time.

70. For example, in his otherwise superb and blameless book *Modern Freedom*, Professor Adriaan Peperzak argues that “the orthodox Hegelian” response to the multitude of nation-states should be “to repeat on a higher, *truly* universal level the logical sequences that governed [*Rph*] sections 1–329” (Peperzak, 2001, 591), namely, that just as persons must be integrated into a nation-state, the promotion of whose communal interest limits their pursuit of their own private interests, so individual nation-states must be integrated into a world order, in which each nation-state must be made to limit its pursuit of its own national interest in order to seek the common good of all humanity (Peperzak, 2001, 591–594). In other words, the gradual realization of freedom in world history is only “quasi-actual” (Peperzak, 2001, 589) and should be replaced (according to the demands of Hegel’s own logic, according to Professor Peperzak, 2001, 592), with a sort of global nation-state. In the same vein, another penetrating and sensitive professor, Paul Lakeland, likewise objects that since Hegel’s philosophy of spirit is rooted in his understanding of humanity *generally*, we need not accept as Hegel did the enduring *particularity* of nation-states (Lakeland, 1984, 147–152). Shlomo Avineri too allows himself in the end to be carried away by a particularly optimistic passage in Hegel’s lectures on the philosophy of history (Avineri, 1972, 207).

71. A “global Empire of Spirit” as it is called by Eric Weil (1950, 102), whose sympathies are like the aforementioned commentators.

72. Professor Peperzak objects that Hegel’s nation-state is not Christian (Peperzak, 2001, 593), and I agree. Indeed, I assert that a nation-state *cannot* be Christian, because Christianity is not a national religion. This will be explained further on. I would also point out that the common good of all humanity is sought in world history: it is sought not deliberately, but rather through the passion of each nation-state acting from its own national principle, guided by the “cunning of reason.”

73. These would include probably hundreds of tribes, such as the Franks, Teutons, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Allemanni, Thuringians, Burgundians, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Lombards, and others. I would like to suggest however that we should understand “Germans” in a still broader sense as having *in principle* nothing to do with merely natural determinations like biological descent, geography, and so on. What we should really understand by “the Germans” are *all* those in the world who adhere to “Christianity,” which for Hegel means simply the *modern* spirit.

74. *TW* 12, 422–424. Admittedly, Hegel says that the Germans are marked by a love of freedom and a profound loyalty (*TW* 12, 425–426), but these are not fixed characteristics in the same way that people of other nations have fixed

characteristics: the German love of freedom is only the heart's *absence* of fixity with respect to any one particular inclination; and German loyalty is the total commitment that is possible only for a person so naïve and with such an indeterminate soul that he can be absorbed in any passing fancy, lacking any character, that is, any resistance to such absorption. See also: *Enc.* §405 R in the section on the "feeling soul," where Hegel contrasts the one with heart (*Herz*) and *Gemüt*, who is under the sway of individual feelings, with the one who maintains himself in pursuit of a definite purpose, undistracted by passing fancy, and *TW* 12, 38, where Hegel says that "Character [*Charakter*] comprises all inner particularities, the way one behaves in private relationships, etc."

75. With their conversion, the absolute religion "was introduced into the still naïve, unformed hearts [*Gemütern*] of those peoples" (*TW* 12, 413).

76. Thus Hegel warns against "falling into Rousseau's error," that is, holding the barbarian state of the ancient Germans to be the ideal: it is only the absence of corrupting influence, Hegel says, and not the possession of affirmative freedom (*TW* 12, 419). See also Rousseau, 1964, 152–157.

77. *TW* 12, 414, 424.

78. See for example his dismissal of Scandinavian and German mythology (*TW* 12, 424; *Enc.* §80 A; Hegel, 1986b, 347). To the extent that the historical Germans (limiting this term to the northwestern Europeans of late antiquity) did in fact have some native culture (i.e., determinate nationality), they *cannot* be identified as *Germans* in the way Hegel means the term, since for him to be German is simply to be free from the limits of nationality and race.

79. *TW* 12, 105–133, 217–218, 232–233, 256–259, 277, 287–288, 341–342.

80. *TW* 12, 419–428.

81. The parallels between the Germans of late antiquity in Hegel's version of Christianity and the Jews of late antiquity in the traditional account are clear: both are stateless peoples on the fringes of a great empire, yet whose stateless humiliation makes them the appropriate vehicle for the introduction of the new and pure religion into the world. Hegel's Germans also resemble Marx's proletariat, the propertyless class whose total deprivation of any stake in capitalist society makes it uniquely capable of ushering in a new order. We might also add that for Hegel, the Germans are such a good candidate for the vehicle of Christianity because they are the product of a sort of *virgin birth* just as Jesus was said to have been (Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26–35): all other nations have been born "naturally" insofar as their national consciousness and identity emerged from spirit's being-for-itself within a certain part of the natural world; yet the Germans emerged independently of any such natural connection.

82. Thus, for example, Augustine accepted the near collapse of the Roman state from the invasion of the Visigoths, seeing in it divine providence (Augustine, 1948, book 1, chapter 8), though for a Roman pagan like Cato the Younger,

a national catastrophe like the (earlier) collapse of the republic before Caesar was an incomprehensible event, the only response to which could be suicide (Plutarch, 1919, lxx).

83. Buchwalter, 2009, 95.

84. *Enc.* §552.

85. We cannot therefore identify the *European* or Caucasian spirit with the German and Christian spirit. In his deduction of the races Hegel treats Europeans as a race in the full sense of the term: a form of spirit that is bound to a certain part of nature (of which it is the ideality) (*Enc.* §393 A). It was apparently Hegel's opinion that Europe is geographically superior to Africa and Asia (however odd such an assertion may seem to us). But even if this were true, the European race would still be the truth of only a determinate part of nature, and hence would not be the same as "the Germans," who, I would argue, when properly understood, cannot be considered European any more than Asian or African. This is so precisely because to be "German" for Hegel means, as I have said, to be beyond race and nationality: it is to be *modern*, to see world history as the realization of the good that transcends any and all mere nations (except the one which is called a "nation" only homonymously).

86. This point is not readily apparent if one restricts oneself to the lectures on the philosophy of religion, but there is nothing in the lectures which contradicts this interpretation, and more importantly, it is the only one that makes sense when one takes into account Hegel's work generally. Yet even in the lectures on the philosophy of religion, it is clear that Christianity is to be understood in this non-national or anti-national way: it is, after all, in the lectures that Christianity is explicitly distinguished from all other religions by being not a national (*ethnische*) religion (Hegel, 1985, 412). Additionally, Christianity is not described in the lectures as being realized in a nation-state as other religions are, but instead as being a *church*, a community of faith centered around the propagation of knowledge (Hegel, 1984, 256–257); and the Christian is not (insofar as she is Christian) a member of a nation-state, but instead a citizen of the kingdom of God (Hegel, 1984, 254). Moreover, when Hegel discusses the "realization of the spirituality of the [Christian] community," he says that it is best realized in *Sittlichkeit* (Hegel, 1984, 264): yet Christianity does not have as its object the positive structure of a nation-state (as other religions do), but has instead the same object as philosophy, namely, "world history" (Hegel, 1984, 269). Furthermore, of the deficient forms of *Sittlichkeit* in modernity that Hegel mentions in the lectures on the philosophy of religion (the Enlightenment and Pietism) (Hegel, 1984, 265–269), he says elsewhere that they were deficient because of the *national particularity* of the French and Germans (*Deutsch*), respectively: he says that the defect of the Enlightenment lies in the fact that it is *in opposition to* religion, after the manner of the understanding (*TW* 12, 525–526), and that it had this

defect because of the *national* peculiarities of the French and other Romantic nations (*TW* 12, 500–501); and the *Deutsch* have as a national peculiarity too much of a tendency toward inwardness and arbitrary feeling (Hegel, *Enc.* §394 A), which is how he characterizes Pietism (Hegel, 1984, 267).

87. No less pivotal a figure in Islamic philosophy than al-Fārābī wrote that the truth can either be apprehended philosophically, through demonstration, or religiously through symbols. These symbols, he said, can be comparatively more or less adequate to the truth understood philosophically, but each nation has those most appropriate to it. Thus philosophers, whether from the same or different nations, will agree; and the philosopher can see what is valid in each of the symbolic (i.e., religious) systems peculiar to nations (al-Fārābī, 1985, V, chap. 17, §2). Moreover, the imam, who holds the highest office in Islam, should be such a philosopher (al-Fārābī, 1985, V, chap.15, §13). Thus for al-Fārābī, the truth proper to Islam is one which is supernational, though it is the fulfillment of and is the qualified affirmation of all of the partial, symbolic truths different nations possess. This truth is not peculiarly Arabic, though it arose through the Arabs, a stateless people in late antiquity whose life was one of itinerant roaming, not being tied to a specific region of the world. Perhaps the most eminent Islamic philosopher, Ibn Rushd (i.e., Averroes), likewise agreed that though the truth can best be known philosophically (Ibn Rushd, 2007, §4), it can also be known symbolically, or through representations (Ibn Rushd, 2007, §§16, 22, 55); and, philosophers of different nations will agree (Ibn Rushd, 2007, §§4, 9) and will be able to see the partial truth in symbolic systems (Ibn Rushd, 2007, §45). I do not claim that al-Fārābī or Ibn Rushd are Christian in every sense, but only that the positions iterated here are properly “Christian” in Hegel’s sense, such that Hegel’s “Christianity” is no more a national religion than al-Fārābī’s “Islam.”

88. As stated earlier, by “Christian” here we do not mean simply those who profess to be Christian, nor do we mean to exclude those who profess not to be Christian. Indeed, it is likely that many avowed “Christians” cling too tightly to the transcendence of God which Hegel understands to be sublated in Christianity (and hence these people would not be considered proper Christians by Hegel). Conversely, many who confess to other religions or perhaps even to none at all would meet Hegel’s criteria (broadly speaking) for being Christian if they understand history to be the progressive realization of the good. In Hegel’s own idiosyncratic and highly unorthodox interpretation of Christianity, it is the religion of *modernity*, which understands the political history of the world to be the revelation of God.

89. This is how we should interpret the remarks quoted earlier, about the rights of heroes and the state being limited by religion. It is only the *nation-state* (and the hero who realizes it), not the state proper (world history) whose validity is limited by the absolute religion.

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Philosophy, Religion, and the Politics of *Bildung* in Hegel and Feuerbach

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1. Introduction

In 1828 a twenty-four-year-old Ludwig Feuerbach, who had previously spent two years listening to Hegel lecture in Berlin, sent his teacher a copy of his recently completed doctoral dissertation along with what Laurence Dickey has described as a “monumentally important letter”¹ in which he suggested that Hegel might detect in his dissertation “traces of a manner of philosophizing which could be called the actualization and secularization of the idea, the *ensarkosis* or Incarnation of the pure logos,” while at the same time rejecting Hegel’s identification of Christianity as the consummate religion.² Dickey has argued that Feuerbach’s employment of the terms “logos” and “*ensarkosis*” obscures the distance that separates his own position from Hegel’s, and has as a result contributed to a long-standing failure to appreciate Hegel’s intentions as a

Protestant philosopher of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*).³ My aim in this chapter is to elucidate some of the ethico-political issues that are at stake in the departure from Hegelianism that is anticipated but not yet executed in Feuerbach's early letter to Hegel.

One of Feuerbach's main objectives in *The Essence of Christianity* was to refute the Hegelian claim that religious consciousness apprehends in the form of feeling and representation the same content that is grasped by philosophical consciousness in the form of thought.⁴ Rather than seeking to determine whether or not Feuerbach succeeded in this task, I want to consider the implications of his and Hegel's respective understandings of the relationship between philosophy and religion for their thinking about politics and *Bildung* (roughly, culture and education). These implications are important for assessing Feuerbach's relation to Hegel, and in the course of my discussion of them I hope to show that Dickey's characterization of this relation needs to be qualified. For while it is true that Feuerbach's repudiation of Hegelian logos theology involved his exchanging what Dickey describes as Hegel's liberal, "accommodationist" Christian values for atheistic ones, Dickey's contention that Feuerbach subscribed to "an anti-Protestant conception of Christian history that had previously been developed in France"⁵ is misleading both because it involves a misconception of Feuerbach's estimation of Protestantism, and because it overlooks the thoroughly German pedigree of Feuerbach's humanism, which owes much more to Lessing, Goethe, and Hegel himself, and to the *Bildung*-ideal that Feuerbach inherited from them, than to figures such as St. Simon or Comte, evidence of whose direct influence on Feuerbach, so far as I am aware, is nonexistent.⁶

That Feuerbach did not espouse a simply anti-Protestant view of history is reflected in the fact that he published in 1842 a set of "Preliminary Theses for the Reformation of Philosophy," which he apparently hoped would contribute to a change of religious consciousness as momentous as did the publication of a more famous set of theses three centuries earlier, and in so doing cast himself in the role of a second Luther. Like Hegel, Feuerbach recognized the need for a Second Reformation, which he associated with the development of modern political institutions, especially the modern state (*Rechtsstaat*). Unlike Hegel, he believed that this Second Reformation would lead to the dissolution of Christianity in a united Germany organized as a secular, democratic republic.

In order to contrast and to identify the philosophical commitments that underlie the respective views of Hegel and Feuerbach on the roles

that philosophy and religion have to play in equipping individuals for participation in the life of the modern state, I will in what follows focus on certain ways in which the concept of *Bildung* is developed in their writings, especially in connection with religion. Few concepts have played a more central and variegated role in the history of modern German letters than this one, and its importance in Hegel's philosophy has been widely acknowledged.⁷ Feuerbach's understanding of *Bildung*, by contrast, has received relatively little attention from his commentators. To the extent that it can be reconstructed from his writings, it shows a number of basic similarities to Hegel's. With respect to the question of whether religion is compatible with, or has rather become an obstacle to, the continued progress of *Bildung*, however, the two disagree fundamentally.

2. Hegel: The Role of Protestantism in the Actualization of the Ethical Idea

In general terms Hegel thinks of *Bildung* as the laborious process of formative self-development that is characteristic of the lives of spiritual entities, including individual persons, historical traditions, and spirit itself, the universal individual.⁸ Animals and other natural beings that do not exist for themselves have no need of *Bildung* because they already are by nature what they are meant to be (*sein soll*).⁹ As living organisms, human beings experience the same instinctual desires and drives as animals. Unlike animals, however, human beings only become what they are meant to be through the cultivation and disciplining of their intellectual and moral powers, which occurs through their participation in a variety of forms of social life, including, most fundamentally, linguistic communities, and, more specifically, families, religious associations, educational institutions, and the state.

As described by Hegel, the theoretical *Bildung* of the individual involves, in addition to the acquisition of knowledge, the development of his or her powers of reflection and the ability to consider objects in different connections and from various points of view. It further involves the achievement of a contemplative stance that is characterized by "a sense for the object in its free independence, apart from a subjective interest,"¹⁰ and that is capable of distinguishing the essential from the inessential. Practical *Bildung* consists in the moderation of natural drives and impulses and the formation of a rational will. A cultivated person is

one whose actions are guided by universal principles rather than subjective inclinations. It is through intellectual and moral *Bildung* that the individual becomes able to fulfill his duties toward other individuals and to the state. Education, which is “the art of making human beings ethical,” involves for Hegel nothing less than a “rebirth,” whereby human beings transcend their “original nature” and acquire “a second, spiritual nature” that first enables them to participate in the infinite life of spirit, which is what man essentially is, and which is essentially free, even though human beings have often failed to recognize these truths.¹¹ Although the degree to which human beings throughout history have been aware of their spiritual nature has varied widely, the spirit through participation in the life of which they have succeeded to varying degrees in achieving an existence that corresponds to their concept is one that remains “eternally present to itself; it has no past, and remains forever the same in all its vigor and strength.”¹²

Human beings transcend their natural condition by being assimilated into the ethical life of the communities in which they participate, which include the political and religious institutions in which the activity of spirit throughout history is expressed. It is through this activity that spirit creates a world for itself that exists in space, in which it sees itself reflected, and through the rational comprehension of which it comes to knowledge of itself. The process of becoming ethical begins in the family, which Hegel refers to at one point as “the immediate substantiality of spirit.”¹³ In the family the individual becomes aware of himself as a member of a whole to the other members of which he is related through bonds of familial piety and affection. Unlike the family, the life of the state is governed by customs and laws, and by the “basic sense of order” that is shared in common by its members.¹⁴ The ethical life of the state consists in the unity of the universal will that is embodied in its laws and institutions with the will of the individual. Here education has the task of ensuring “that the individual does not remain purely subjective but attains an objective existence within the state.”¹⁵

Hegel recognizes that the forms of government that human beings have produced throughout history, the standards of justice that have been embodied in their laws, the aesthetic ideals expressed in the works of art and architecture they have created, the moral ideals toward which they have striven, the forms of religious practice they have developed, and the conceptions of the divine that they have entertained are all inextricably interrelated. Every state is based on religion in the sense that “the state has emerged from religion and now and always will emerge from it;

each particular state from a particular religion.”¹⁶ The manner in which a people conceives the divine and their relationship to it is a reflection of their own self-consciousness, which is expressed in the forms of ethical life that they produce through their actions. Christianity is the religion which teaches that the absolute reality is an infinitely free spirit in the image of which human beings were created. Christians participate in the life of this spirit through their inward acceptance of Christ, in whom God became incarnate, entering into the realm of finitude and enduring the death of finite existence before rising again to infinite life, thereby reconciling the world to himself.

The fundamental insight of Christianity is that in Christ the infinite is reconciled with the finite in such a way that the temporal existence of human beings and their life in the world is taken up into the life of infinite spirit. Hegel contends that during the Middle Ages this insight was obscured and degraded insofar as medieval Catholicism was characterized by an otherworldly conception of sanctity that equates holiness with chastity, asceticism, the renunciation of worldly goods, and withdrawal from involvement in temporal affairs. In this form of religious life the sacred and the secular are regarded as mutually exclusive, and a distinction is made between two classes of Christians, those who have left the world behind in order to devote themselves to sacred things, and those who remain in the world. Hegel credits Luther with having achieved in principle the reconciliation of the spiritual and the secular. Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone (*sola fide*) freed Christians from the externality of medieval religious life and subservience to an ecclesiastical authority that claimed to be in exclusive possession of the means of salvation. His rejection of celibacy was also a vindication of the religious significance of family life. His recognition of the validity of the religious vocation of the laity and his rejection of the medieval ideal of spiritual poverty involved an acknowledgment of the spiritual importance of what had hitherto been regarded as worldly concerns and activities, including economic and political ones. His affirmation of the independence from ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the political authority of the German princes allowed for the development of the modern state. In short, the religious Reformation inaugurated by Luther established the spiritual conditions for the development of those forms of ethical life in which the idea of freedom is actualized in the modern world.

Hegel's definition of *Sittlichkeit* or ethical life as “the *concept of freedom which has become the existing world and the nature of self-consciousness*”¹⁷ draws attention to the interrelation of the institutions in which ethical

life appears in history and the subjective attitudes of the individuals who participate in them.¹⁸ The state exists immediately in the form of custom, and mediately in the form of self-conscious freedom. Education initially involves the internalization of the customs (*Sitte*) in which the ethical idea is immediately actualized. Religious education is one of the principal ways that this occurs. Religious education begins, and for the *ungebildete* classes also ends, with familiarization with religious stories, creeds and catechisms, and the inculcation of a religious disposition (*Gesinnung*) through acts of personal devotion and participation in communal worship. Because religion has the absolute truth for its content it gives rise to the most exalted sort of disposition,¹⁹ and insofar as they are associated with it, that is, insofar as they are regarded as divinely sanctioned, the state, its laws, and the duties of the individual, which are determined by his social station (*Stand*),²⁰ are able to achieve a more enduring and preeminent place of importance than their private purposes and interests. Among the attitudes toward the development of which religious education contributes is "The disposition of *obedience* toward the dictates of the government, attachment [*Anhänglichkeit*] to the person of the prince and to the constitution and the feeling of national honor."²¹ Because of the importance that he attributes to the role of religious education in integrating individuals into the ethical life of the state at "the deepest level of disposition," Hegel believes the state ought to require its citizens to belong to a religious community, while leaving to them the prerogative of deciding which one.²² Those among his contemporaries who advocated the separation of church and state Hegel regarded as "gravely mistaken" because in his view they underestimated the interest that the state has in inculcating in its citizens those ethical dispositions upon which the continued existence of the state itself depends.²³

Although they live "within the same religion and ethical community" and share "precisely the same . . . substantial condition," cultivated and uncultivated members of the same people or *Volk*, nevertheless have "completely different . . . needs."²⁴ Among the needs that distinguish the cultivated from the uncultivated Christian is the need to comprehend in the form of thought the truths that are acknowledged by ordinary religious believers in the form of religious representations that are the objects of faith, as well as the rational validity of the divine commandments to which the ordinary believer subjects himself on the basis of his trust in the authority of revelation. Hegel seeks to meet these needs in his lectures on the philosophy of religion and in his *Rechtsphilosophie*,

respectively. The speculative reconstruction of Christian doctrine that he develops in the former is predicated on the assumption that the sensual images by means of which the ordinary Christian affirms the articles of faith “have a significance distinct from that which the image as such primarily expresses—that the image is something symbolic or allegorical and that we have before us something twofold, first the immediate and then what is meant by it, its inner meaning.”²⁵ This inner, allegorical meaning of Christian doctrine, which Hegel outlines in his discussion of the consummate religion in the last section of the lectures, is apprehended at the level of thought. The form of thought is universality. Insofar as God becomes an object of thought, the representational form of ordinary religious consciousness is “dissolved” (*aufgelöst*).²⁶ Nevertheless, Hegel maintains, the content of religious consciousness remains unaffected by this formal dissolution, so that the truths that the ordinary religious believer affirms in the form of propositions that describe sensible occurrences and the truths that the speculative philosopher affirms in the form of descriptions of the process through which spirit distinguishes itself from itself and rediscovers itself in this distinction remain identical despite the formal difference in the manner in which they are conceived and expressed in each case.

Although it is correct, according to Hegel, to say that religion is the foundation of the state, and that one obeys God by obeying the law, the divine will that is actualized in the state is not a capricious, natural will to which human beings are heteronomously subjected, and knowledge of it is not the exclusive prerogative of anyone. Laws only reflect the divine will to the extent that they are determined by the concept of freedom. The divine will is a rational will, the validity of whose edicts is in principle thoroughly comprehensible to anyone who is able to think about what is right in and for itself. “To know what is rational is a matter for cultivated thought and particularly for philosophy . . . [and] the progressive development [*Fortbildung*] of the concept [*sic*] of freedom, right, and humanity among human beings is necessary in itself [*für sich*].”²⁷ The highest point in the *Bildung* of a people is reached when its laws and its ethical life have been rationally comprehended, for it is through such comprehension that spirit succeeds “in uniting its subjectivity with the universal of its objectivity.”²⁸ It follows that, for Hegel, the highest point of Protestant *Bildung* is achieved when the various moments of the concept of freedom that was affirmed by Luther only subjectively are thoroughly and systematically articulated in the form of philosophical science.

3. Feuerbach: *Bildung* as the Emergence of the Human Species-Essence from Nature

In spite of the significant deviation from Hegel's understanding of Christianity that is already expressed in his 1828 letter to Hegel, Feuerbach continued to present himself to the public as a defender of the Hegelian cause against its critics until 1839, when he published a "Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy" in Arnold Ruge's *Hallische Jahrbücher*, calling for a "return to nature," which he had come by this time to regard as the "all-inclusive and all-encompassing reality."²⁹ Although the publication of this essay marks a significant turning point in the development of Feuerbach's views, it is not unanticipated. During the six previous years Feuerbach had published three major works in the history of modern philosophy in which we find him moving steadily toward the conclusion, expressed unequivocally in his book on Pierre Bayle and in the important essay "Philosophy and Christianity" that philosophy and theology are fundamentally irreconcilable, that the principal achievement of modern thought has been to secure the freedom of philosophical and scientific inquiry from its subordination to the authority of revelation, and that this achievement coincides with the rediscovery of the infinity and substantiality of nature—an achievement associated by Feuerbach with the nature philosophers of the Italian Renaissance, especially Bruno, and with Spinoza, whose identification of extension as an attribute of infinite substance Feuerbach equates with the divinization of matter.³⁰

The extent of Spinoza's influence on Feuerbach has, in my view, not been sufficiently appreciated,³¹ especially with respect to Feuerbach's rejection of the Hegelian claim that the difference between religious and philosophical truth is a merely formal one. In his *Lectures on the Essence of Religion* Feuerbach acknowledges that "Spinoza in his *Theologico-Political Treatise* had already considered and criticized theology and religion from the same standpoint" that Feuerbach himself adopted in *The Essence of Christianity*.³² Whereas Hegel had claimed that religion and philosophy share a common interest in the cognition of absolute truth, Feuerbach agrees with Spinoza against Hegel that religion "requires not so much truth as piety"³³ and that the anthropomorphic representations of the divine that are characteristic of ordinary religious consciousness have "nothing at all in common with philosophy."³⁴

Although there does not appear in Feuerbach's writings an account of individual *Bildung* such as the one developed by Hegel that I sought at

the outset of the preceding section to summarize, like Hegel Feuerbach clearly associates theoretical *Bildung* with the development of a capacity for objectivity and disinterested contemplation. "*Bildung* in general," he writes, "is nothing else than the elevation [*Erhebung*] of the individual above his subjectivity to objective universal ideas, to the contemplation of the world."³⁵ The difference between Hegel and Feuerbach on the question of the compatibility of religion and *Bildung* hinges on Feuerbach's repudiation of Hegel's strategy for extracting purely conceptual truths from religious picture-thinking. As an alternative to this strategy Feuerbach seeks to develop a psychological account of the origins of such thinking and of the pressing existential needs served by it.

Feuerbach argues that religious consciousness is distinguished from philosophical consciousness both by virtue of the different mental faculties that each of them employs, and by the interest that each takes in its object. The faculties employed in philosophical reflection and in scientific inquiry more generally are reason and the senses, and it is through their employment that scientists and philosophers set out to discover empirically verifiable laws of nature and logically necessary truths. The person who is committed to the disinterested pursuit of truth as an end in itself is compelled to acknowledge even those painful truths that conflict with his or her wishes. By contrast, the mental faculties employed by religious consciousness are imagination (*Fantasie*) and feeling (*Gemüt*). The distinction that Feuerbach draws here bears a resemblance to the one later drawn by Freud between the reality principle and the pleasure principle. Reason, by allowing us to grasp the laws by which the course of nature is governed, enables us to recognize our place in nature and to regulate our lives accordingly. Faith, on the other hand, "unfetter[s] the wishes of subjectivity from the bonds of natural reason; it confers what nature and reason deny; hence it makes man happy, for it satisfies his most personal wishes. . . . Faith is nothing else than belief in the absolute reality of subjectivity."³⁶ But if this analysis is correct, then *Bildung*, which Hegel and Feuerbach agree involves the achievement of an objective view of the world, requires the abandonment of faith rather than its restatement in speculative terms.

Whereas Hegel emphasizes the cognitive component of religious consciousness, and sees in the history of religion a progressive movement toward increasingly adequate conceptions of the absolute and the relation of human consciousness to it, Feuerbach insists that the fundamental concern of the religious believer is not truth but salvation, blessedness

(*Seligkeit*), deliverance from the painful limitations of finite, earthly existence, by which he or she feels constrained. The predicates that religious faith attaches to the divine being are predicates of human nature, and although the God of religious faith is a superhuman being, he remains for that very reason thoroughly human. This God is a person, a loving father who is just and merciful, who is in possession of an omnipotent will through which he creates the world out of nothing, and to which the course of natural and historical events is subject—a being, moreover, who listens to the prayers of those who approach him in faith, who is sensitive to their afflictions, who answers their petitions by means of miraculous interventions into the natural order, and, above all, who removes the painful sting of death by assuring them of their personal immortality. This is a God who meets subjective human needs, and insofar as the relation of religious consciousness to its object is determined by the desire to have these needs met, the religious attitude is a practical attitude, unlike the attitude of philosophy, which is theoretical and contemplative. Furthermore, a God from whom all anthropomorphic attributes have been abstracted is a God rendered religiously impotent, and one of Feuerbach's principal concerns in *The Essence of Christianity* is to show how far the *ungläubige Glaube* or disbelieving faith of those speculative theologians who have sought through such abstraction to reconcile the claims of faith and reason stands removed from what he takes to be the true spirit of Christianity in its authentic form.

In *The Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* Feuerbach observes that "The mystics and scholastics of the Middle Ages had no ability and aptitude for natural science only because they had no interest in nature."³⁷ The crucial event in the movement from the medieval to the modern period as Feuerbach construes it consisted in the rediscovery of nature, and the place of human beings in it, as suitable objects of scientific and philosophical inquiry. Although this rediscovery was in many instances pioneered by investigators who continued to regard themselves as Christian believers, and even had theological motivations for wanting to understand God's "other book," their scientific interest in nature and the investment of their spiritual energies in the effort to comprehend it nevertheless contributed, if only inadvertently, to the decline of the theological spirit that had inspired Western thought since late antiquity.

The observation that many of the pioneers of modern science and philosophy were Christian believers whose scientific and philosophical investigations were religiously motivated is not inconsistent with

Feuerbach's understanding of the relationship between religion and *Bildung*. Feuerbach's view of *Bildung* is closely related to his view of nature as the all-encompassing reality and of human beings as the part of nature that distinguishes itself from nature in consciousness. Whereas for Hegel nature is "the Idea in the form of otherness,"³⁸ subjective spirit is, for Feuerbach, nature in the form of otherness, and absolute spirit is a figment of Hegel's philosophical imagination, for it is impossible, he maintains, to distinguish absolute spirit from subjective spirit (equated here with the human essence) "without transporting ourselves back to the old standpoint of theology [and thereby] subjecting ourselves to the delusion that the absolute spirit is an *other* spirit distinct from the human essence, i.e., a ghost existing outside of ourselves."³⁹

Feuerbach identifies reason, will, and affect (*Herz*) as the powers that are constitutive of the human *Gattungswesen* or species-essence, and he associates *Bildung* with the development of these powers and of a harmonious balance among them. The process through which the human species-essence gradually appears in the course of the natural history of the universe is a long and complicated one that is closely intertwined with the history of religion, for religion is the form that *Bildung* initially takes, and it is only gradually that *Bildung* distinguishes itself from religion. In fact, insofar as the consciousness of any individual human being is nothing but that individual's body viewed under a different aspect, it is not possible to tell the story of the history of *Bildung* without telling the story of the history of the natural events that produced the organic structures upon which human consciousness depends. Feuerbach's designation of himself as a "*geistiger Naturforscher*,"⁴⁰ or natural historian of spirit, is an indication of his belief in the continuity of these two types of history.

As a Spinozist (with whatever qualifications may be called for), Feuerbach regards the history of the universe as an uninterrupted sequence of events unfolding according to invariable laws of causal necessity that are in principle perfectly intelligible. The existence of human beings is no less dependent upon the forces of nature than is the existence of any other part of nature. One thing that distinguishes human beings from other living beings is their awareness of their existential dependence upon these forces. This awareness first takes the form of a belief that these forces are subject to the wills of invisible beings with human-like motivations, and of cultic actions aimed at honoring or propitiating them. *Bildung* makes its first appearance "in the night of ignorance [*Unwissenschaft*], in times of misery, helplessness [*Mittellosigkeit*], and rudimentary culture

[*Unkultur*], when for this very reason the imagination overshadows man's other powers, and human beings live in subjection to the terrifying creatures of their own fancy and to violent passions."⁴¹

In the years immediately following the publication of *The Essence of Christianity* the concept of the *Glückseligkeitsrieb* or drive-to-happiness begins to play an increasingly important role in Feuerbach's thinking about religion, and the same concept figures prominently in his later attempt to develop a eudaimonistic ethical theory. It may be that Feuerbach's discussion of the *Glückseligkeitstrieb* bears traces of the influence of Spinoza's discussion of the conatus in Book III of the *Ethics*. In the sense in which Feuerbach employs the term, "human egoism" denotes "the self-assertion of man in accordance with his nature," or "man's love for himself, that is love of the human essence, the love that spurs him on to satisfy and develop all the impulses and tendencies without whose satisfaction and development he neither is nor can be a true, complete man."⁴² Religion is the product not only of human hopes and fears, but more fundamentally of the human desire to be free from the evils that restrict the natural human tendency toward self-preservation and toward the satisfaction of those species-drives (*Gattungstriebe*) in which the human essence is manifested. The deities that have been worshipped throughout history are as various as the needs and capacities of the human beings who have worshipped them, and who, in doing so, have inadvertently developed these capacities. Certain needs, such as the needs for food and for protection from the natural forces by which human existence is constantly threatened, are more basic than others. As new arts and sciences are developed in the course of history, new deities emerge who are regarded as the patrons of these arts and sciences. The stage of cultural development of a people is reflected in the gods they worship. "A people with no spiritual drives has no spiritual gods."⁴³ Thus, it is only after the Babylonians have acquired a concept of cosmic justice that it is possible for Shamash to be represented on an obelisk delivering to Hammurabi the legal code with which the latter's name has come to be associated. It is only after the Greeks have come to honor divine wisdom that they consecrate temples to Athena. And, to follow out the same line of thought, it is only when human self-consciousness, in recognizing the dignity of each individual person, has achieved a degree of ethical universality which it had not hitherto possessed, that Christ is able to be regarded as the embodiment of divine love, the savior of the human race. Christ, as Feuerbach thinks of him, is "an image under which the unity of the species has impressed itself on the

popular consciousness.”⁴⁴ Love is not divine because Christ first declares it to be so. Christ is acknowledged as a divine being—the incarnation of a God who is love (1 John 4:8)—only when human beings have *already* come to recognize, if only in the form of religious representation, that love is “the subjective essence of the species.”⁴⁵

Philosophy, science, medicine, morality, law, and art originate in religion, from which, after achieving the requisite degree of development, they distinguish themselves as autonomous cultural spheres. Part of what this involves is the acknowledgment within each of these spheres of norms the validity of which is no longer religiously sanctioned. For example, artistic expression ceases to serve the sole purpose of conveying religious truths or of glorifying God and comes increasingly to be regarded as an intrinsically meaningful activity. The *raison d'être* of the state ceases to be thought of as the preservation of a divinely established political order, and comes to be identified instead with the protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare of its members. To the extent that religion opposes the growing independence of these cultural spheres it becomes an obstacle to the further progress of *Bildung*. When this happens, the philosopher must assume the role of physician of the soul, employing the instruments of reason for the therapeutic purpose of disempowering those products of the religious imagination that have become obstacles to further progress, “so that man, who is always unconsciously governed and determined by his own essence alone, may in future consciously take his own, human essence as the law and determining ground, the aim and measure, of his ethical and political life.”⁴⁶ Although at a certain point religion and *Bildung* prove to be incompatible, “*Bildung*, insofar as religion is the first and oldest form of it, can be termed *the true and perfect religion*, so that only *a truly cultivated man is truly religious*.”⁴⁷

4. The *Aufhebung* of Protestantism in Feuerbach's Humanistic Republicanism

At least by the early 1840s, Feuerbach, who is not as forthcoming about the details of his political philosophy as one might hope,⁴⁸ had acquired the belief that a democratic republic is the form of government most compatible with the human species-essence, presumably because he had come to view this form of government as the one most conducive to “human development in its richest diversity” (a phrase borrowed here

from the Humboldt epigram cited by Mill at the outset of his famous essay *On Liberty*).⁴⁹ Feuerbach nevertheless endorsed Aristotle's observation that it is important not only to know which is the best form of government, but also to know what form of government is best suited to a particular people at a particular point in its history.⁵⁰ For it is only when *Bildung* has achieved the requisite degree of development and breadth of appropriation that a people is in a position to adopt the best form of government as their own; and so, the great task of the age is "Not to make men religious, but to educate them, to disseminate *Bildung* among all classes and estates."⁵¹

Unlike Hegel, Feuerbach unequivocally endorsed the principle of separation of church and state. He understood freedom of conscience to be the *sine qua non* of a free state, and to include the freedom of the individual to believe foolish things and to pursue his own good in his own way. He also maintained, however, that "man's task in the state is not only to believe what he wishes, but to believe what is reasonable, [and] not only to believe, but to know what he can and must know if he is to be a free and cultivated man."⁵² Foremost among these things in Feuerbach's way of thinking are the psychological causes that produce and perpetuate anthropomorphic conceptions of the divine, enthrallment to which he regarded as an obstacle to the achievement of personal and political maturity.

Feuerbach clearly shared Hegel's appreciation of the fact that those modern political institutions in which the idea of freedom is embodied depend for their establishment and preservation upon the cultivation of certain ethical dispositions on the part of the individuals who participate in them. He was persuaded, however, that the prevailing religious attitudes of the German people had become an obstacle to the type of political progress through which the idea of freedom might be actualized in history.⁵³ In a letter to his publisher, Otto Wigand, dated June 22, 1848, by which time the hopes of German liberals for political change had begun to recede, Feuerbach observed that "The Reaction is effective in the depths of the German soul [*in der Tiefe Deutschlands*], the *Reformation or Revolution*, at least up to this point, only on the surface."⁵⁴ Feuerbach's reluctance to heed the exhortations of Ruge and Marx to turn his attention from religion to politics, and to become more directly involved in the political events of the day, was due partly to his conviction that no enduring political progress would be possible until the ethical

disposition of the German people was transformed in such a way that they might be prepared to regard themselves as citizens of a free state rather than the wards and subjects of paternalistic Christian princes. It is in light of these considerations that Feuerbach undertook through his writings on religion to transform "theologians into anthropologists, lovers of God [*Theophilen*] into lovers of humanity [*Philanthropen*], candidates for the next world into students of this world, religious and political flunkies of heavenly and earthly monarchs and aristocrats into free, self-conscious citizens of the earth."⁵⁵

Feuerbach was certainly acquainted with, and indeed shared, Hegel's estimation of the historical significance of Luther's affirmation of the vocation of the laity and the liberation of the conscience of the individual Christian from the external compulsion of ecclesiastical authority. Evidence of this familiarity is to be found in the introduction to his *History of Modern Philosophy from Bacon to Spinoza* (1833).⁵⁶ There, in presenting an encapsulated survey of the movement of spirit in the history of Western thought, Feuerbach makes statements that are similar to ones made by Hegel in a number of places where he discusses the role of Protestantism in the actualization of the ethical idea in the modern age. Feuerbach's employment of incarnational language in this context is especially noteworthy. He proposes that, with the advent of Protestantism, the *logos endiathetos* or "internal logos," which he associates with pre-Reformation Christianity, became the *logos prophorikos* or "uttered logos,"⁵⁷ and as a result the world-negating tendency of medieval Christianity gave way to a new spirit that Feuerbach associates with the affirmation of civic life ("*das freie bürgerliche Leben*"), the assertion of the independence of the state over against the ecclesiastical hierarchy, freedom of conscience, the affirmation of the God-given dignity of the individual, and the reinvigoration of the arts and sciences. Feuerbach's employment of Philo's distinction in this context may be questionable, the point that the distinction is meant to serve is nevertheless one with which Hegel would likely have concurred.

Although, as I have argued in the preceding pages, what ultimately separates Feuerbach's understanding of religion from Hegel's is his rejection of the metaphysical and epistemological assumptions that inform Hegel's philosophy of religion, it is clearly the case that Feuerbach's views on religion and its relation to politics were shaped by his own historical experience, which was as far removed from Hegel's as Bruckberg and

Rechenberg are from Berlin.⁵⁸ In his Address on the Tercentenary of the Augsburg Confession, Hegel had suggested that part of the enduring importance of the action taken by the German princes at Augsburg was that they, in proclaiming this document to be the complete expression of the doctrine of the Lutheran Church, had secured for the laity the “inestimable freedom [of being] permitted to express opinions on religion.”⁵⁹ Feuerbach, whose older brother, Karl, was driven to attempt suicide on two separate occasions after being imprisoned in a dungeon in the wake of the Carlsbad Decrees issued by Metternich, and who was himself exposed to the indignity of having his home searched by the police, had become painfully aware that Germans living a full fifty years after the publication of the *Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen* were still being denied this “inestimable freedom” by the descendants of those very same Christian princes. It is understandable that the piety of these princes neither filled Feuerbach with the same “confidence and security” that it did Hegel, nor succeeded in assuring them of his love.⁶⁰

It is also understandable how these experiences might have instilled in Feuerbach the conviction that the Protestant Reformation had secured the freedom of Protestants from the spiritual tyranny of “religious Catholicism” only to establish “political Catholicism” in its place, and to subject them to the authority of monarchs with whose will the divine will was now identified, even by Hegel (albeit with certain qualifications and my means of a rather more complicated procedure than the one employed by his more theologically and politically conservative contemporaries). It remained for a Second Reformation to achieve in the political realm what the first had achieved only in the religious. A Protestant, Feuerbach claimed, is nothing but a religious republican, and Protestantism leads naturally to political republicanism “once its religious content has disappeared; that is, has been exposed, unveiled.”⁶¹ This is the task to which Feuerbach devoted most of his adult life, and it is striking that when, at the outset of a series of public lectures that he was invited by the students of Heidelberg to deliver in 1848, and in which he reflected on the course of his intellectual and literary development, the incarnational motif that made its first appearance in his 1828 letter to Hegel reappears, though now transposed into a materialist key: “Religion, the subject of these lectures, is to be sure most intimately connected with politics; however, our consuming interest today is not theoretical but practical politics. We wish to participate directly and actively in politics. . . . we demand that

the word should finally become flesh, the spirit matter; we have had enough of political, as we have of philosophical, idealism; we are now determined to become political materialists."⁶²

The claim that the *practical* negation of Christianity is a *fait accompli* is one that Feuerbach makes repeatedly in his published and unpublished writings beginning in the late 1830s. This claim is controversial because it rests on a questionable premise, namely, that the "true" spirit of Christianity is essentially otherworldly (i.e., unconcerned with the scientific investigation of nature and its direction toward the fulfillment of temporal aims) and irrational (i.e., unconcerned with the rational justification of belief, and content to appeal to the authority of revelation). In light of the wealth of textual evidence that Feuerbach cites in support of this claim, I regard as implausible Walter Jaeschke's contention that Feuerbach, in making it, was "working with a totally unhistorical concept of Christianity."⁶³ Feuerbach purports to have located his criterion for what constitutes the essence of Christianity in the historical confessions of the Church, a fairly broad selection of texts from the history of Christian theology, and the Bible. Whoever would dispute his claim that Christianity has exhausted itself as a historical force, and that our scientific, economic, aesthetic and political interests are no longer compatible with its "essence," must answer his challenge that they can do so only by casting these sources aside.⁶⁴ This would require showing either that Feuerbach was wrong to locate the essence of Christianity in these sources, or else that he misinterpreted them. The former option would require in turn either an alternative definition of the essence of Christianity, or else a concession that no such essence can be discovered historically, together with an acknowledgement of the theological implications of this concession. These are complex issues that cannot be taken up here, where I must limit myself to the observation that it was Feuerbach's therapeutic purpose in attempting to draw the attention of his contemporaries to what he regarded as the inconsistency between their own actions and their professed beliefs to thereby give them the courage to renounce in theory what they had long since renounced in practice.

In conclusion, although I find no evidence in Feuerbach's published and unpublished writings to support Dickey's contention that Feuerbach subscribed to "an anti-Protestant conception of Christian history that had previously been developed in France," the available evidence *is* consistent with Dickey's observation that Feuerbach confronted German Protestants

(and, one might add, not only them) with an ultimatum: Embrace the claims of faith and renounce the claims of reason, or else embrace the claims of reason and renounce the claims of faith! This ultimatum bears some similarity to the one with which Kierkegaard presented his readers, and one way of characterizing the difference between Hegel and Feuerbach is to suggest that, in the debate between Tertullian and those, like Clement and Origen, who sought to present the truths of the Christian faith in the form of Alexandrian philosophy, Feuerbach, like Kierkegaard, takes the side of Tertullian, though confronted by the same "Either/Or," he opts for the other prong of this fork in the road.⁶⁵ This having been said, I find no more reason than Marx, Engels, or Max Stirner did to doubt the sincerity of Feuerbach's claim that his theoretical negation of Christianity is one that was intended to preserve its anthropological truth, so that "Christ disappears, without, however, his true nature disappearing."⁶⁶ The Christ that remains has been stripped of salvific efficacy, but retains his power as a symbol of human solidarity in the face of the heartless indifference of nature, where we are forced to make a home for ourselves, and to create, if we can, the conditions under which our humanity may flourish.

Notes

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1. Dickey, 1993, 322.

2. Feuerbach, 1984, 103–108. An English translation of this letter appears in Hegel, 1984, 547–550. I have made use of the available English translations of the relevant works of Hegel and Feuerbach, although in a number of cases I have altered them.

3. Dickey, 1993, 321–328, 339–340, 343. Although Feuerbach's 1828 letter appears in retrospect to anticipate the critique of religious consciousness developed in *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), it is important to bear in mind that Feuerbach's philosophical position in 1841 is significantly different from his position in 1828. In his letter to Hegel Feuerbach is concerned to repudi-

ate Hegel's claim that Christianity can be regarded as the consummate religion insofar as it succeeded in conceiving God as spirit (albeit only in the form of representation). At this point Feuerbach remains committed to Hegel's speculative understanding of spirit itself, but insists that to conceive God as spirit is necessarily to conceive God pantheistically, which involves an understanding of the relationship between God and nature that is incompatible with theism, and therefore with Christianity. Feuerbach's early "anthropological pantheism" is articulated in his doctoral dissertation, *De ratione, una, universali, infinita* (1828), and in his first book, *Gedanken über Tod und Unsterblichkeit* (*Thoughts on Death and Immortality*; 1830). As late as 1835–1836 Feuerbach continued to regard idealism as "the one true philosophy," and to maintain that "Whatever is not *spirit* is *nothing*" (Feuerbach, 1974, 139)—a view he explicitly repudiated in 1839 (see Feuerbach, 1970c).

4. Cf. Feuerbach, 1973, 10–11. His other main objective was to undermine the identification by the disciples of the late Schelling of the personality of God as the ultimate metaphysical principle, and the sovereign will of God as the cause of the universe—an identification that served to legitimize the *restaurativ* political agenda of the new king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and the Neo-Pietist Prussian aristocrats who came to power with him. I discuss this objective of Feuerbach's in Gooch, 2011.

5. Dickey, 1993, 327.

6. See Feuerbach, 1969c, 260–265. Lessing himself is identified by Dickey with the accommodationist theological tradition in which he seeks to locate Hegel. Whether or not Feuerbach properly understood Lessing's theological intentions, it is important to recognize that, rather than rejecting the literary tradition with which Lessing's name is associated, Feuerbach was staking a claim to be its rightful heir. This is made abundantly clear in Feuerbach's essay "Philosophy and Christianity" (Feuerbach, 1969c) to which he refers his readers in the preface to the second edition of *The Essence of Christianity*.

7. Vierhaus, 1972, surveys the permutations and polemical deployments of this concept from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth centuries. The various contexts in which the concept occurs in Hegel's writings are examined by Moog, 1934; Pöggeler, 1980; Wood, 1998. The connection between *Bildung* and religion in Hegel is considered by Lauer, 1983. I am not aware of any extended analysis of Feuerbach's *Bildungsbegriff* in the secondary literature, but see Reitemeyer, 2001, 86ff.

8. Cf. Wood, 1998, 301–302.

9. *TW* 4, 258. References in this and the following note are to remarks contained in the lectures on *Rechts- Pflichten und Religionslehre für die Unterklasse* included among Hegel's Nürnberger Schriften.

10. *TW* 4, 259.

11. *Rph* §151 A.
12. Hegel, 1955, 33 = Hegel, 1975, 31.
13. *Rph* §158.
14. *Rph* §268 A.
15. Hegel, 1955, 111 = Hegel, 1975, 94.
16. Hegel, 1955, 128 = Hegel, 1975, 108.
17. *Rph* §142 (emphasis in the original).
18. Cf. Wood, 1990, 209–218.
19. *Rph* §270 A.
20. Hegel, 1955, 94 = Hegel, 1975, 80.
21. *TW* 4, 266.
22. *Rph* §270 R.
23. Hegel, 1999, 194. For a discussion of the development of Hegel's thinking on the relationship between church and state during the decade following the publication of *Rph*, see Jaeschke, 1981. The continued relevance of Hegel's insights into the role of religion in shaping ethical intuitions is discussed in Lewis, 2007.
24. Hegel, 1955, 179 = Hegel, 1975, 147–148.
25. Hegel, 1983, 293. So far as I am aware, Hegel, who professed to be an orthodox Lutheran, did not address the issue of Luther's having explicitly rejected the allegorical method of interpreting scripture and insisted on adhering to the plain, literal sense whenever possible.
26. Hegel, 1983, 229.
27. Hegel, 1983, 341–342.
28. Hegel, 1955, 177 = Hegel 1975, 145–146.
29. Feuerbach, 1970c, 52–53, 61 = Feuerbach, 1972, 85–86, 94.
30. Feuerbach, 1974, 17, 21–27.
31. In a letter to his friend Christian Kapp written in early 1835 Feuerbach identified himself as a Spinozist, though not without some equivocation, writing “Sie wissen, ich bin (wenigstens zum Teil?) Spinozist; meine Moral ist Metaphysik” (Feuerbach, 1984, 218). Eight years later he referred to Spinoza as “the Moses of modern freethinkers and materialists” (Feuerbach, 1970a, 287 = Feuerbach, 1986, 24). Feuerbach's reception of Spinoza was mediated by the controversy that ensued in the wake of the publication of Jacobi's famous letters to Mendelssohn *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* in 1785. For a well-informed discussion of Jacobi's considerable influence on Feuerbach, see Weckwerth, 2004. Weckwerth suggests that Feuerbach's polemical critique of Christianity can be viewed “as a late remnant of the *Spinozastreit*, which thus continues to play a role in debates within early Hegelianism and in the incipient *Vormärzphilosophie*” (433).
32. Feuerbach, 1967b, 16 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 9.
33. Spinoza, 2007, 184.
34. Spinoza, 2007, 9.

35. Feuerbach, 1973, 236 = Feuerbach, 1957, 132.
36. Feuerbach, 1973, 228 = Feuerbach, 1957, 126.
37. Feuerbach, 1970a, 286 = Feuerbach, 1986, 23.
38. *Enc.* §247.
39. Feuerbach, 1972, 156–157 = Feuerbach, 1970b, 246–247.
40. Feuerbach, 1973, 15 = Feuerbach, 1957, xxxiv.
41. Feuerbach, 1967b, 235 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 209. This is an admittedly loose translation of a passage that is difficult to render in English. The last phrase reads in German “wo der Mensch in den überspanntesten Vorstellungen, den exaltiertesten Gemütsbewegungen lebt.”
42. Feuerbach, 1967b, 61 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 50.
43. Feuerbach, 1967b, 65 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 53.
44. Feuerbach, 1973, 442 = Feuerbach, 1957, 268.
45. When Feuerbach speaks of thought as a species-activity and of reason as the objective essence of the species, he means in part that thought by its very nature is communicable, so that my thoughts (in contrast to my sensations) are in principle capable of being thought by others, just as theirs are capable of being thought by me. We cannot feel other people’s pain. Nevertheless, our capacity to empathize with the suffering of others seems in many cases to involve the recognition that those with whom we empathize are beings like ourselves, that is, beings with whom we share a common nature. I take it that Feuerbach has something like this in mind when he refers to love as the subjective essence of the species.
46. Feuerbach, 1967b, 30 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 22–23
47. Feuerbach, 1967b, 239 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 213. In his Twenty-Third Lecture, which anyone interested in Feuerbach’s views on *Bildung* will want to read, Feuerbach cites the words of Goethe, “Wer Wissenschaft hat, braucht die Religion nicht,” but says that he prefers to replace “Wissenschaft” with “Bildung” because the latter term “den ganzen Menschen umfaßt.” Freud, who expressed admiration for Feuerbach in his youth, cites the same passage from Goethe in the opening pages of *Civilization and Its Discontents*.
48. Those accustomed to associating Feuerbach with the history of socialism may be surprised to learn of the “enthusiasm and wonder” with which he reports in an 1848 letter to Otto Wigand having read in German translation excerpts from the writings of Tom Paine sent to him from America by Hermann Kriege, who had previously been expelled, at the instigation of Marx and Engels, from the *Bund der Gerechten* or League of the Just (from which the *Bund der Kommunisten* later emerged). In the same letter Feuerbach refers to the desirability of a German translation of “a library of the collected works of the American literary freedom-heroes [*Freiheitshelden*],” and mentions Jefferson specifically (Feuerbach, 1993, 178–179).
49. Cf. Feuerbach’s April 1848 letter to Karl Riedel in Feuerbach, 1993, 151–152, as well as Feuerbach, 1967b, 379–380 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 336–337.

50. Feuerbach, 1967b, 378–379 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 336. He concedes (in 1848) that a constitutional monarchy is the form of government that is most practicable, and therefore most reasonable, for the German people in their immediate historical circumstances. What he seeks in the short term is constitutional protections of the basic “rights and freedoms unanimously claimed by all German people,” foremost among which he includes freedom of speech.

51. Feuerbach, 1967b 241 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 214.

52. Feuerbach, 1967b, 245 = 1967a, 219. Feuerbach did not, to my knowledge, address the potential conflict between these two beliefs, reflected, for example, in debates about the teaching of the Darwinian theory of evolution in American public schools.

53. That Hegel too was aware of the obstacles to political progress posed by a certain type of Protestant theological conservatism is shown in his remarks on religious fanaticism in *Rph* §270 A. Feuerbach’s more acute awareness of these dangers is probably due to differences both of temperament and historical experience, including changes in the political climate that resulted in the censorship of the Young Hegelians and often in their penury.

54. Feuerbach, 1993, 165; emphasis added.

55. Feuerbach, 1967b, 31 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 23.

56. Feuerbach, 1969a.

57. For a discussion of this originally Stoic distinction as it is employed by Philo, see Kamesar, 2004. Used by some earlier Alexandrian theologians, the distinction was rejected as unorthodox by the time of Athanasius.

58. Feuerbach’s imprudent decision to publish the scathingly satirical *Xenien* directed against the leaders of the Neo-Pietist Awakening (*Erweckungsbewegung*), which he appended to his first book, *Thoughts and Death and Immortality* (1830), prevented him from ever obtaining a salaried academic position. He spent his most productive years in the Frankish village of Bruckberg, the site of a porcelain factory of which his wife had inherited partial ownership. After the factory went bankrupt, in 1860 Feuerbach and his family were forced to move to Rechenberg on the outskirts on Nuremberg, where he lived until his death in 1872 under severely strained economic circumstances.

59. Hegel, 1999, 187.

60. Hegel, 1999, 195.

61. Feuerbach, 1969b, 162 = Feuerbach, 1972, 152.

62. Feuerbach, 1967b, 7–8 = Feuerbach, 1967a, 1–2.

63. Jaeschke, 1980, 349.

64. See Feuerbach, 1969b, 146–147 = Feuerbach, 1972, 146–147.

65. The common denominator here would appear to be Jacobi, by whom Kierkegaard and Feuerbach were both influenced, although in opposite ways. For a discussion of Kierkegaard’s qualified alliance with Tertullian see Bühler, 2008, 131–142.

66. Feuerbach, 1973, 442–443 = Feuerbach, 1957, 269. Marx, Engels, and Stirner agreed that Feuerbach's atheism remained all-too religious, but for different reasons; Marx and Engels on the grounds that Feuerbach's overemphasis on love as the subjective essence of the species had prevented him from developing a theory capable of informing a praxis that could effectively lead to the empowerment of the proletariat, Stirner because of his insistence that the individual (*der Einzige*) who seeks to take possession of all that is his "own" must refuse categorically to acquiesce in any act of sacralization, including Feuerbach's sacralization of the human species-essence.

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Religion, Civil Society, and the System of an Ethical World

*Hegel on the Protestant Ethic
and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Andrew Buchwalter

Hegel advances a unique and nuanced account of the relationship of religion and politics.¹ On the one hand, he espouses a view of the relationship of church and state that exhibits important affinities with liberal positions on the issue.² He rejects the idea of a state religion, he condemns religious interference in the affairs of state and political life generally, he acknowledges the plurality of religious confessions, he claims that the state must remain agnostic as regards any particular religious creed, he assigns the state the task of protecting the right of conscience and the free expression of belief, he denies ecclesiastical organizations any special exemption from state law, and he asserts that religious argumentation can play a role in political life only if it acknowledges public norms of rationality.

Yet if Hegel thus advocates the separation of church and state, he does not defend any principled separation of religion and politics. On the contrary, both in his political philosophy and his philosophy of religion he goes to great lengths to thematize their interrelationship. This is so simply because the two spheres, central as both are to human experience, will inevitably overlap and conflict with one another. "It is silly to suppose that we may try to allot them separate spheres, under the impression that their diverse natures will maintain an attitude of tranquility one to another and not break out in contradiction and battle."³ More positively, he claims that, whatever their differences, both express a common principle—that of freedom, at least as it pertains to conditions for human self-definition, self-determination, and self-realization.⁴ He asserts further that any complete account of societal life must acknowledge the degree to which religion and politics not only share common assumptions but contribute to a shared reality. Claiming that a people or nation is properly constituted and sustained in the interplay of institutional structures and forms of cultural sentiment, he asserts that religion and politics are themselves two constitutive elements, "two contrapuntal aspects,"⁵ of a single social body. In addition, Hegel maintains that the two spheres directly implicate one another, indeed that they are codependent. Political community, dependent on forms of civic engagement and committed to processes of collective self-definition, requires the presence of dispositions rooted in religious modes of human self-understanding. Conversely, religion cannot fulfill its vocation without institutional structures that safeguard the right of conscience and the exercise of belief, accommodate attention to what is collectively binding in a meaningful way, and allow religion to probe the domain of interiority and inward spirituality. Religion and politics are thus "reciprocal guarantees of strength,"⁶ and each is conceptually unintelligible without the other.

Hegel's complex view of the interdependency of religion and politics is illustrative of what may be termed his "dialectical" account of the relationship of the secular and the spiritual, at least under conditions of modernity. On the one hand, he claims that the core principles of modern social and political life derive from religious assumptions and conceptions. Thus modern notions of right, liberty, moral responsibility, social reciprocity, and legitimacy all have their origin in Protestant notions of the individual believer and his/her relationship to the divine. Conversely, religion itself—at least in the form of modern Christianity—depends for its realization on the institutions and modes of social being specific to modern "secular" existence. Protestant Christianity is rooted in a

notion of freedom understood as selfhood in otherness (*Beisichselbstsein*). So understood, however, religion cannot be expressed only subjectively or inwardly, but requires the formation of institutions objectively committed to the principle of freedom.⁷ While differentiating the domains of the spiritual and the secular, Hegel is also committed to an account of their wide-ranging interdependence. Indeed, it is a measure of this interdependence that the institutional arrangements needed for a full mediation of the infinite and finite mandated by Christianity depend for their support and ongoing stability on a self-reflexive worldly public culture—for Hegel, “the self-consciousness of ethicality”⁸—that articulates the idea of religion itself.

In appealing to Protestantism and Lutheran Christianity to articulate the conjunction of religion and politics, Hegel is not suggesting that historical Protestantism itself accomplished this conjunction. Because Lutheranism remained directed first and foremost to the principles of heart and sentiment, it could fashion at best only an “embryonic” account of this conjunction.⁹ Nonetheless, if Protestantism is to make good on its claims, if Christianity is indeed to understand itself as a “religion of freedom,” it must effectuate a transition from subjective to objective; it must refashion a notion of freedom understood as subjective inwardness into a *System der sittlichen Welt*.¹⁰ Indeed, the Protestant Reformation itself mandates a “second” reformation,¹¹ one in which existing assumptions about subjective freedom and the structures of societal life are reconceived to accommodate the idea of realized freedom demanded by Christianity itself.¹² And in fact such comprehensive reformation is just the task of the *Philosophy of Right*, whose stated aim is to fashion a “realm of actualized freedom, [a] world of spirit produced from within itself as a second nature.”¹³

In what follows I detail Hegel’s effort to present the *Philosophy of Right* as a system of an ethical world, conceived generally as a comprehensive explication of the interconnection of secular and spiritual considerations. I focus specifically on Hegel’s account of civil society.¹⁴ Although just one component of a system of an ethical world, this account plays an especially important role, since the self-seeking individualism and the attending social pathologies addressed in Hegel’s analysis of civil society pose a special challenge to an effort to reconcile the spiritual and the secular.

The chapter is comprised of five sections. Section 1 details general features of Hegel’s account of the relationship of Protestantism and modern civil society. Section 2 reprises elements of Hegel’s depiction of

the pathologies of modern market societies as well as the solution he proposes via a theory of work-related social cooperatives or corporations. Section 3 explicates the degree to which corporations articulate the Protestant principle and its worldly realization. Section 4 illustrates the distinctiveness of Hegel's undertaking by comparing his account of the relationship of a Protestant ethic and modern capitalism to that of Max Weber. Section 5 concludes with remarks concerning the place of a religious social ethos in a global market society.

1. Protestantism and Civil Society

In Hegel's account of *Sittlichkeit*, civil society comprises the domain of modern market societies, where self-reliant individuals pursue their material self-interest and their own sense of well-being. As such, the domain of civil society is both shaped by and illustrative of the principle of Christianity, Protestantism in particular. To begin with, Hegel maintains that the very pursuit of economic gain is variously intertwined with an ethos of Protestantism. Economic pursuit is granted legitimacy by a religion which rejects the spiritual juxtaposition of clerical to lay life. It is accorded legitimacy by a religion that, valorizing all that pertains to human beings, assigns as much status to possession and private property as to subjective freedom and individual conscience. It is accorded legitimacy by a religion which, championing the right of subjective particularity, endorses and promotes satisfaction of everyday needs and desires—the right of the individual to be “satisfied in his activity, to have joy in his work and to consider his work as something both permissible and justifiable.”¹⁵ Likewise, in assigning value to the pursuit of profit and personal self-fulfillment through work, religion confers value on commerce and the arts: “Industry, crafts and trades now have their moral validity recognized, and the obstacles to their prosperity which originated with the Church, have vanished.”¹⁶ Again, economic pursuit is legitimized by a notion of religion for which virtue itself, directed now not to “holy” works but to the intentions informing agency, focuses not on monastic self-denial but the manner in which individuals conduct themselves in everyday affairs, commercial life included. And it is granted legitimacy by the Protestant idea of freedom itself, which, in mandating the objective realization of spirit, not only surmounts the distinction between subjective inwardness and worldly activity, but asserts that subjective autonomy is only attained

in the capacity of the self to find and maintain itself in the circumstances of its external embodiment. Indeed, Hegel claims that the disciplined pursuit of material self-interest, to the degree that it consolidates a sense of individual self-sufficiency, itself realizes the inward self-awareness central to the Protestant principle.¹⁷ It is no coincidence that “the principle of self-sufficient particularity” is explicitly thematized *as a Christian principle* in the section on civil society.¹⁸

Hegel’s conception of civil society does not focus just on the needs of the particular individual. No less important is a “second principle”—that of the comprehensive interdependency in which individuals, in satisfying their own needs, find themselves intertwined with the needs of others and with the functioning of the social order generally. Developed against the backdrop of industrial specialization and its accompanying division of labor, modern civil society is the domain in which individuals express and realize their own interests via society as a whole, just as society itself is sustained through pursuit of individual self-interest. Civil society entangles individuals in an economic “system of all-round interdependence,”¹⁹ . . . wherein the liveliness, happiness and legal status of one man is interwoven with the livelihood, happiness and rights of all.”²⁰

In thus characterizing modern society, Hegel again affirms the significance of Protestant freedom for a system of ethical life. As a comprehensive system of interdependency, one that both presupposes and entails the interconnection of individual and communal interest, civil society gives expression to modes of mutuality and reciprocity. For Hegel, such modes exemplify the relationship of self and other articulated in the Protestant view of the relationship of the finite and the infinite, the individual and the divine.

Civil society is also important in that it clarifies and realizes the concept of right, itself a concrete expression of Protestant subjective freedom. Inasmuch as a system of commercial exchange best functions only to the degree that individuals are valued and recognized for their economically relevant contributions irrespective of such status considerations as class, familial or ethnic background, and gender, civil society allows for the realization of right as a universal principle, indeed as a principle of humanity. In a functioning civil society, Hegel famously writes, “I am apprehended as a universal person in which all are identical. *A human being counts as such because he is a human being*, not because he is Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc.”²¹ Civil society gives concrete and publicly validated expression to a notion of right committed to “infinite

personality as such,”²² thus realizing the “Christian principle” that marks “the pivotal and focal point in the difference between antiquity and the modern age.”²³ This is the principle that “the individual *as such* has an infinite value,” and in the sense that freedom constitutes the “actuality of human beings—not something which they *have*, as men, but which they *are*.”²⁴ Moreover, predicated on the comprehensive mediation of individual and community, modern market societies supply the framework for a constitutional order institutionally committed to the rights, dignity, and equal treatment of each and every individual. Joachim Ritter is correct to claim that “for Hegel, the legal and political freedom of civil society is part of the history of Christian freedom.”²⁵

2. The Vicissitudes of Civil Society

Hegel, to be sure, is well aware of the deficiencies of modern civil society—more so in fact than were most political economists of his age. Because civil society is at root the domain of particularity driven by self-seeking individuals and because it valorizes the individual primarily as a component in a system of economic exchange, it gives expression to myriad antagonisms, polarities, inequities, and discontents that undermine its capacity to promote social cohesion and to realize subjective freedom. Not only does such a system serve to consolidate and publicly validate, via the language of personal rights, “atomistic” or possessive individualism. In valorizing individuals in terms of uniformly common attributes geared to economic exchange, civil society contributes to the forms of anomie, rootlessness, exploitation, and personal commodification that since Rousseau have come to be recognized as the distaff side of modern social life.

Of the many pathologies that grip civil society, Hegel places emphasis on the phenomenon of poverty. For Hegel, poverty represents, not a personal failing on the part of affected individuals, but a structural feature of modern market societies themselves. Propelled by desires on the part of individuals to maximize wealth, market societies give rise to boom-bust cycles where overproduction inevitably leads to layoffs and unemployment. In this way modern societies generate an impoverished underclass, what Hegel calls a “rabble” (*Pöbel*). A feature of this underclass is that it acquires a measure of permanence, since its members—deprived of economic resources and unable to draw support from the extended economic family structure of traditional societies—are restricted in the

mobility and opportunities needed to play a role in the economic life of society.²⁶

But Hegel's understanding of the rabble is focused first and foremost not on material deprivation. His attention above all is to poverty as a psychological or cultural phenomenon, one expressed in a mentality of alienation and degradation. For one thing, the poor in modern societies exhibit a lack of self-respect and self-esteem. Not only does the lack of work deprive them of the sense of self-reliance central to the membership ethos of modern societies; the poor are also conscious that they lack the social recognition central to a community predicated on performance and the marketability of individual effort. Indeed, inasmuch as rights themselves are tied to processes of social recognition, the poor perceive themselves as lacking in rights themselves; they understand that their social membership is exemplified just by their disenfranchisement. Moreover, to the degree that the poor appreciate their lack of social recognition, they in turn withdraw their own recognition of society, not only through envy and resentment, and not only through anger directed at the wealthy, but in an adversarial relation to society itself, be it through rejection of work and the achievement principle or through rebellion against the very existence of the social order itself. Nor are attitudes expressing this "degradation of civil society" restricted to the poor alone; they are present in the thinking of all members of society, including the wealthy, who themselves participate in undermining the bonds of civility at least implicitly present in modern societies.²⁷ Not only does civil society, in accentuating exchange value, encourage those with means to regard others as commodities available for purchase.²⁸ The vast disparities in wealth encourage the rich to cultivate a sense of indifference and even disdain that further denigrates the worth and humanity of the poor. Poverty, far from confinable to a segment of society, is for Hegel a systemically pervasive problem, one affecting social life in its entirety. Poverty pointedly expresses Hegel's claim that civil society is that domain in ethical life characterized by an "extreme loss of ethicality,"²⁹ one affording "a spectacle of extravagance and misery as well as of the physical and ethical corruption common to both."³⁰

Hegel is not sanguine about the prospects for solving poverty and the other maladies associated with civil society. He famously notes how the presumed solutions only replicate the problems in question. Elaborate forms of public assistance would further rob individuals of the self-reliance whose lack is one element in the poor's deficient sense of

self-respect. Similarly, efforts to counteract poverty through publicly created employment programs would be counterproductive, as these would only contribute to the surplus production that first created the problem. On both counts Hegel famously claims “despite an *excess of wealth* civil society is *not wealthy enough*—i.e. its own distinct resources are not sufficient—to prevent an excess of poverty and the formation of a rabble.”³¹

Yet if no definitive solution is available, Hegel does offer strategies for containing and mitigating the difficulties. Noteworthy is the idea of the *corporation*—work-related cooperatives that hark back to the medieval and early modern guild systems and find attenuated reaffirmation today in labor unions, professional associations, and trade organizations. In Hegel’s account, corporations counteract the ill effects of market societies by furnishing assistance to those made indigent by market forces. They do so in part by providing direct material assistance to those in need or distress. More importantly—and in contrast to the “humiliating” nature of abstract welfare programs—corporations furnish assistance enabling individuals to assume or resume “productive” roles in society—for instance, through job training and placement programs.³² In addition, corporations combat the practices that first cause unemployment and the attendant poverty. They do so by imposing restrictions on excessive acquisitiveness and on the number of individuals employed in a particular trade. They do so as well by challenging the forms of cultural degradation associated with poverty, enabling individuals to (re)acquire, through the shared identity accompanying corporate membership, an element of the self-esteem undermined in a system of untrammelled competition. Moreover, inasmuch as corporate recognition attends above all to the specific skills and talents the individual possesses as a member of the group, it reinforces the particular “qualitative” sense of self-worth ignored and undermined in the system of recognition associated with modern legal structures—focusing merely on the abstract and quantitatively uniform right of all to pursue their individual self-interest. Furthermore, corporate membership, in inculcating a sense of commonality, not only renders individuals more apt to contribute to the welfare of the whole but nurtures the type of consciousness directed to the shared responsibilities obscured in a system of self-seeking, “atomistic” individualism. Finally, inasmuch as corporate members *themselves* contribute to eliminating the pathologies of modern commercial life, their actions circumvent the “statist” solutions that, imposed exogenously, reinforce the cultural dependency emblematic of the problems in question. With the theory of the corporation, Hegel

seeks to counteract the *aporia* of modern social life, yet in a consequential way, that is, by tapping the ethicality present in modern social life itself.³³

3. Corporations and the Protestant Principle

The corporation is important not least because it variously attests to the centrality of Protestantism for Hegel's broader system of ethical life. First, the corporation both reaffirms and concretizes the right of subjective freedom and in particular the principle of infinite personality that forms the core of the Protestant principle. Consonant with "the Christian principle of the age," membership in a corporation, as with careers generally, is neither dictated by birth (as with the economic family unit of Greece and Rome), nor externally prescribed, as in Plato's state, but is instead a product of individual choice.³⁴

Second, the Protestant conception of the infinite worth of the individual bears on the identity of the corporation as a site of social justice. Not only does the corporation recognize a subsistence right and indeed a "right to life" ("absolutely essential to human beings"); it affirms that formal rights are incomplete without the material resources needed for their pursuit—that "negative" liberties depend on their "positive" counterparts.³⁵ It is with reference to the socioeconomic dimensions of Protestant freedom that Hegel—who reminded the well-heeled churchgoers of his day that for Christ "the gospel is preached for the poor"³⁶—may be characterized, however qualifiedly, as a Christian socialist.³⁷

Third, the corporation affirms the "right of particularity" central to the Protestant notion of subjective freedom. Proper to the esteem or honor conferred by and received in the corporation is precisely the understanding that the individual is to be appreciated for his "infinite particularity"—not as bearer of abstract rights uniformly possessed by all citizens but as a unique person distinguished by the specific talents, skills, and capabilities he/she brings to the cooperative. Protestantism promotes a view of economic association that recognizes "the individual as particular," with regard to his or her specific contribution to the social unit.³⁸ Moreover, the modern *Korporation* expresses the Protestant principle through the "infinite" manner in which it honors the individual as particular. Inasmuch as the individual is recognized in virtue of his/her general membership in a community, he/she is esteemed not just for the distinctive skill or ability he/she may possess, but because the right

to be recognized for that skill or ability is itself now deemed to be a feature of subjective freedom.³⁹ The corporation gives concrete expression to the Protestant principle whereby the individual is honored in his or her particularity not just for the particular attribute itself but because a right of particularity as such is now generally recognized, indeed as a feature of the individual's "humanity."⁴⁰ In this way corporate membership includes an expectation for the everyday civility and courtesy that Hegel associates with Protestantism;⁴¹ it affirms as well the *infinite* nature of Christian freedom, wherein the individual is not only deemed to possess infinite worth but is *understood*, by him- or herself and others, as entitled to such esteem.

Fourth, the corporation provides striking illustration of Hegel's "Protestant" secularization of traditional Christian morality and in particular his view, asserted against monastic holiness, that virtue is now expressed not in the ascetic renunciation of mundane needs but in the "ethical" manner in which those needs are pursued. While Hegel goes to great lengths to criticize the production and consumption practices of capitalist societies, he does not direct his animus at those practices themselves. To the degree that production and consumption are pursued in ways contributive not only to economic welfare but to the well-being of the community generally—to the extent that they are components of the corporate cooperative, they acquire not only ethical but religious approbation.⁴²

Fifth, the corporation also provides an instructive account of Hegel's treatment of religious social conscience, understood traditionally as the effort to ameliorate the plight of the poor, the indigent, and those in distress. To the degree that conscience of this nature takes the form of individual acts of kindness, it has little place in Hegel's theory of objective spirit.⁴³ Inasmuch as poverty is here construed as a systemic problem rooted in the basic structure of modern market societies, its solution, to the extent that one is forthcoming, must have recourse to institutional measures.⁴⁴ Yet this is not to say that the notion of conscience, even religious conscience, ceases to play a role in a modern treatment of poverty. On the contrary, the corporation may be seen as just the site wherein conscience continues to perform this role, albeit in a markedly transformed sense. What characterizes the corporation is precisely its "conscientious" nature, its functioning as conscience institutionalized. If the public authority, or *Polizei*, represents the top-down, bureaucratic approach to administering social justice, the corporate solution is rooted

in the sentiment of corporate members who refashion their conduct as producers and consumers so as to prevent the problem from emerging in the first place. The corporation is that domain in civil society which exists and assumes proper reality to the degree that individuals come to recognize that their individual welfare is inextricably intertwined with the welfare of all. As such the corporation embodies the form of concrete social morality or ethical sentiment (*sittliche Gesinnung*) that, already in the morality section of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel claims is the nature of genuine conscience. Moreover, to the degree that the corporation takes the form of institutional conscience, it also contributes to the realization of the Protestant principle itself. Inasmuch as the corporation refashions the institutions of modern market societies to articulate sentiments of care and mutuality, it actualizes the Protestant ideal, whose commitment to external embodiment requires that existing institutions be reconstructed to express the demands of spirit and a notion of freedom understood as selfhood in otherness. Proper development of the corporation permits civil society to assume a place in that “system of ethical life” whose realization constitutes for Hegel the proper fulfillment of the Lutheran legacy.

Hegel’s point, though, is not just that the corporation gives expression to the principle of Protestantism; he suggests as well that Protestantism, and the notion of Protestant conscience itself, finds realization in the corporate entity. Protestant conscience for Hegel takes the form of an individual’s self-certainty in relation to the divine. Yet such self-certainty itself takes the form *a limine* of a universal consciousness—a “universal conscience”⁴⁵—characterized by shared commitment on the part of human beings to their commonality and their common humanity. Inasmuch as the corporation embodies the ideal of such universal conscience, it serves to actualize Protestant conscience itself.

Sixth, the same point can be stated somewhat differently by noting that the corporation gives expression to the spiritual community or congregation (*Gemeinde*), itself the achieved expression of a religion committed to the unity of finite and infinite, human and divine. Not only does the corporation express the bonds of mutuality and “solidarity”⁴⁶ appropriate to a spiritual community; inasmuch as the activity of corporate members involves promoting the cooperative itself, the corporation, like the congregation, finds full reality in its commitment to communality itself. The corporation is expressed in the *esprit de corps*, indeed in the “spirit of the corporation,”⁴⁷ for like a community of spirit it attains reality

to the degree that the community makes itself the object of consciousness and will. And inasmuch as the corporation represents a decidedly worldly version of a spiritual community—one in which the bonds of “fellowship” (*Genossenschaft*) are rooted first and foremost not in brotherly love itself but in an effort to address the mundane needs of everyday existence⁴⁸—it may more properly represent communal spirituality than a specifically religious community, one still predicated on the distinction of the internal and external, sacred and secular, the spiritual and the mundane. Indeed, as forms of communal fellowship residing in the most markedly polarized domain of secular existence, that where freedom exists in its bifurcation,⁴⁹ the corporations of civil society may most clearly realize the notion of a spiritual community committed to establishing unity in the face of a radical gulf between the finite and infinite. For Hegel, religious commonality (*religiöse Gemeinsamkeiten*) does indeed attain realization in the corporation.⁵⁰ Hegel’s account of the corporation indicates how, in the words of Laurence Dickey, “the circumstances of *homo oeconomicus* allow the kind of religiopolitical regeneration he wished.”⁵¹

To be sure, the worldly realization of Protestantism, for Hegel, cannot be restricted just to the corporate bodies within society. Given its commitment to surmounting such oppositions as inner and other, self and other, substance and subjectivity, Protestantism mandates that such realization must find expression in sociality as it extends to society as a whole. Protestantism does indeed find expression in the state, termed by Hegel the “authentic discipline of worldliness.”⁵² In this context, the state is important in that its institutions can maintain and foster the commonality easily undermined in the autonomization of corporate bodies. “The corporation, of course, must come under the higher supervision of the state, for it would otherwise become ossified and set in its ways, and decline into a miserable guild system.”⁵³ In addition, the state, as the principle of societal totality, is itself the realization of the Protestant principle; it is in “the organization of the state that the divine has broken through into the sphere of actuality.”⁵⁴ Not only does the polity encompass the totality of societal life generally, one reason why Hegel claims that it represents the full expression of a secularly realized “fellowship of free individuals.”⁵⁵ As the site in society that has societal totality itself as its object, it represents the proper articulation of the reconciliation of the spiritual and secular mandated by the Protestant principle.

Appreciation of this point in no way detracts, however, from the centrality of corporations for the system of an ethical world. If that

system does attain full expression in political community, political community itself remains dependent on corporate bodies. A genuine polity is expressed not just in institutional structures but in the disposition or sentiment (*Gesinnung*) of a citizenry that acknowledges, supports, and upholds those structures. This attention to sentiment—"the source of all the legal content of law and the civil constitution"⁵⁶—is, for Hegel, also a bequest of Protestantism. Given the scope and scale of modern states, however, public sentiment can be most effectively nurtured, not by directly involving individuals in public life, but through empowering subpolitical associations like corporations, which in fostering civic activity in more local settings can forge concrete ties between private and public existence. It is owing to their mediating capacity that Hegel terms corporations "the secret of patriotism."⁵⁷ To the extent, then, that the Protestant principle mandates cultivation of public dispositions, it mandates cultivation of corporate bodies as well. If the system of an ethical world culminates in an account of the state, the latter itself depends on the existence of corporations.

Nor could it be otherwise. For Hegel, the system of an ethical world depends on a specific account of ethicality, one based on citizens' cognitive appreciation of and volitional commitment to the principle of ethicality itself. This stance is possible, however, only if individuals can make the conditions of their sociality an explicit object of reflection. For Hegel such reflectivity is cultivated through the differentiations elaborated in modern civil society. In this regard, corporations play a special role. Not only do they emerge in response to the bifurcations of civil society; their distinctive identities are clarified only in their relation to the other corporate bodies present in civil society. In Hegel's account, corporations contribute to the internal self-differentiations needed to realize the system of an ethical world.

4. Hegel and Weber

Hegel's position might be further characterized by briefly comparing it to that of Max Weber, who also explored the relationship of Protestantism and modern capitalist societies.⁵⁸ As Weber did later, Hegel interprets the development of modern life from the perspective of cultural and, in particular, religious categories. Like Weber, he does so with appeal to Protestantism and the idea of a Protestant ethic. And further with Weber,

he regards the Protestant ethic as an eminently this-worldly set of values linked to the conduct of modern social life.

In other respects, though, Hegel's position is significantly distinct from Weber's. For one thing, Hegel has no truck with the inner-worldly asceticism that Weber associates with the vocational ethic of Calvinism. That individuals might find fulfillment and even joy in the pursuit and satisfaction of everyday needs and activities is, for Hegel, one of the chief bequests of the Reformation. To be sure, Hegel's endorsement of this right of satisfaction is not unqualified. Yet to the degree that his Protestant ethic does place restrictions on such modes of self-expression, it is not with regard to those modes themselves but to the one-sided articulations at odds with the conditions for genuine selfhood. The ethical significance of Protestantism, for Hegel, lies not in counseling asceticism in the daily conduct of life but in acknowledging that individual fulfillment presupposes structures of mutual recognition whose support and cultivation are a condition of self-expression itself.

Appreciation of this point is important as it clarifies a more significant distinction between Hegel and Weber.⁵⁹ For Weber, the Protestant ethic serves to support and sustain capitalism and the form of life that is its "spirit." It is an ethic for the methodical-rational conduct of life in a modern bourgeois world. This diagnosis is not absent from Hegel's account. No less than Weber, Hegel—for Karl Löwith, philosopher of the "bourgeois-Christian world"⁶⁰—accentuates the degree to which Protestant inwardness bolsters bourgeois economic activity.⁶¹ Moreover, Hegel anticipates Weber's use of the ethic of Protestantism to account for developmental patterns in modern commercial and industrial life, as is evidenced by his distinction between the economic and political life of "Protestant" North America and "Catholic" South America.⁶²

At the same time, though, the differences between the two theorists are also striking. While Weber invokes the Protestant ethic to explain the development of modern bourgeois society, Hegel does so to articulate normative standards with which to question such development. While Protestantism for Hegel is more accommodating of the rational pursuit of economic gain than Catholicism, it also supplies the type of ethos that can counter a narrow understanding of economic and commercial activity, one tendentially inimical to social life itself. Indeed, it is his claim that the privatism of bourgeois life is anathema to the very individualism it champions.

Of course, Weber himself was no apologist for capitalism. While he does appreciate the potential for freedom implicit in the idea of the rational organization of life,⁶³ he was equally aware—as is clear especially from the closing paragraphs of *The Protestant Ethic*⁶⁴—of the deleterious societal consequences of a mode of life governed alone by egoistic calculation, instrumentalism, and purposive rationality. So governed, modern life, increasingly gripped by administrative controls, faces the specter of an “iron cage” that eviscerates all freedom and genuine experience. Weber thus sounds a concern noted as well by Hegel, who was also mindful of how the economic and administrative structures of modern society can congeal into a “self-constituting and independent power.”⁶⁵

But the central difference between the two thinkers is that, while Weber sees such developments as the by-product of the unfolding of the Protestant ethic, Hegel invokes Protestantism as their antidote. With its notion of freedom linked to selfhood in other, Protestantism provides a way of demonstrating that a social system based upon egoistic calculation and instrumentalism is at odds with itself and the very freedom it champions. For Hegel, the Protestant ethic is invoked above all as a means of affirming, under modern conditions, the idea and, indeed, *spirit* of ethical life over against that loss of ethicality entailed by a one-sided development of the bourgeois world order.⁶⁶ Hegel invokes the Protestant ethic to expose and clarify the level of *Ungeist*—the *Verlust der Sittlichkeit*—evident in the operations of modern civil society. His proposal is distinctive—consonant with his broader effort to surmount a simple opposition of the spiritual and the secular—because this task is pursued, not by contesting the “spirit” of capitalism as such but, at least in principle, by developing it more fully.

5. Conclusion

Many questions can be raised about Hegel's invoking of religion to comprehend and assess modern civil society. By way of conclusion, let me address one issue—that bearing on the very appeal to Christianity for this effort. It might be said, for instance, that while this appeal may have had value for an account and assessment of market societies as they emerged in modern or what Hegel calls “Christian-Germanic” societies, it would seem to have only limited value in the world today, when market

economies have become increasingly globalized. Under these conditions, any consequential appeal to a religious ethos to explicate and, particularly, to challenge the vicissitudes of economic life must have recourse to a much wider range of religious traditions than that countenanced by Hegel.

There is much to be said for such concerns, for clearly there are problems with a characterization of Christianity as the consummate religion, especially under conditions of globality. At the same time, however, it should be remembered that Hegel saw Christianity as itself a global religion. Not only did it emerge as the spiritual pendant to Roman transnationalism; as a consolidation of diverse forms of ancient religions,⁶⁷ it was itself understood by Hegel as a cosmopolitan religion. Originating “where East and West have met in conflict,” Christianity conjoined “the free universality of the East and the determinateness of Europe.”⁶⁸ To the extent, then, that the global market economy of the present might demand a post-Christian, intercultural religious ethos, it is one that arguably is not only compatible with but entailed by Hegel’s account of Christianity.

Notes

1. See Buchwalter, 2012, 24–26.
2. For the most explicit articulation of Hegel’s position on this matter, see Hegel, 1991, §270.
3. Hegel, 1971, §552.
4. Hegel, 1971, §562. See also Hegel, 1975, 90.
5. Hegel, 1984, 459.
6. Hegel, 1971, §552.
7. Hegel, 1971, §482.
8. Hegel, 1971, §552, modified.
9. Hegel, 1983a, 148.
10. Hegel, 1956, 424.
11. Laurence Dickey’s “General Introduction,” in Hegel, 1999, xxi–xxviii.
12. Hegel, 1999, 189.
13. Hegel, 1991 §4.
14. For a general discussion of both Hegel’s conception of the relation of the spiritual and secular and its bearing on his notion of the political, see “Political Theology and Modern Republicanism,” chapter 9 in Buchwalter, 2012.

15. Hegel, 1983a, 148.
16. Hegel, 1956, 423.
17. Hegel, 1974, vol. 4, §199.
18. Hegel, 1991, §185.
19. Hegel, 1991, §183.
20. Hegel, 1991, §§191, 193.
21. Hegel, 1991, §209.
22. Hegel, 1991, §209.
23. Hegel, 1991, §124 R.
24. Hegel, 1971, §482.
25. Ritter, 1982, 185.
26. Hegel, 1991, §241.
27. Williams, 1997, 255.
28. Hegel, 1983b, 196.
29. Hegel, 1991, §184.
30. Hegel, 1991, §185.
31. Hegel, 1991, §245.
32. Hegel, 1991, §§255 and 256.

33. As Hegel writes: through the corporation “the ethical [*Sittliche*] makes its return in civil society, and in a way internal to the ends of particularity. . . . The corporation essentially constitutes . . . the ethical moment in society” (Hegel, 1983b, 202 and 206).

34. Hegel, 1974, vol. 4, §206. See also Hegel, 1983c, §121.
35. Hegel, 1983c, §118.
36. Hegel, 1983b, 194.
37. Harris, 1983, 52.
38. Hegel, 1974, vol. 4, §255.

39. “The principle of the modern world requires that whatever is to be recognized by everyone must be seen by everyone as entitled to such recognition” (Hegel, 1991, §317).

40. Hegel, 1975a, 113.
41. Hegel, 1983b, 205; see also Hegel, 1975, 113.

42. For Hegel’s theory of the corporation as account of an “ethic of rational consumption,” see Anderson, 2001, 193–200.

43. Hegel, 1991, §137.
44. Hegel, 1991, §242.
45. Hegel, 1983c, §66.
46. Hegel, 1983b, 203.
47. Hegel, 1991, §289.
48. Cf. Houlgate, 2005, 118.
49. Hegel, 1991, §184.

50. Hegel, 1991, §270.
51. Dickey, 1987, 156. Dickey's work considers Hegel's early writings and does address the religiopolitical dimension of the corporation itself.
52. Hegel, 1985, 342.
53. Hegel, 1991, §255.
54. Hegel, 1985, 342 n.
55. Hegel, 1991, §359.
56. Hegel, 1999, 210.
57. Hegel, 1991, §289 R.
58. Weber, 1958.
59. For a discussion of the relationship of Hegel and Weber with regard to their theories of the modern state, see Dallmayr, 1994.
60. Löwith, 1967, 237–242.
61. Hegel, 1999, 50.
62. Hegel, 1975a, 166–168. In contrast to Weber Hegel detects a moral-communal dimension in religiously sanctioned economic individualism. Precisely because of the shared religious value placed on work, Protestantism could spawn a sense of mutual trust in individuals.
63. Löwith, 1970, 101–122.
64. Weber, 1958, 181ff.
65. Hegel, 1975b, 94.
66. In Reinhard Bendix's view, Weber follows Hegel in differentiating between state and society, yet redirects the focus of idealization: if "Weber modified the utilitarian position by analyzing the ideals involved in the pursuit of gain, . . . he approached the idealization of social solidarity . . . from the standpoint of Utilitarianism" (Bendix, 1977, 493).
67. See Rózsa, 2005, 252–261.
68. Hegel, 1983a, vol. 2, 380. See MacGregor, 1984, 64.

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Although scholars have written extensively on Hegel's treatment of religion and politics separately, much less has been written about the connections between the two in his thought. Religion in Hegel's philosophy occupies a difficult position relative to politics, existing both within the ethical and historical reality of the state and at the same time maintaining an absolute, transcendent identity. In addition, Hegel's views on the relationship between the two were often revised and refined over time in both his written works and his lectures. His thinking on the subject, however, provides a fascinating look at an element of his practical philosophy that was as controversial in his time as it is in ours. This book highlights various approaches to this intersection in Hegel's thought and evaluates its relevance to contemporary problems, considering issues such as religious pluralism and tolerance, conflicts between Islam and Christianity, and tensions between the secular and religious state.

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